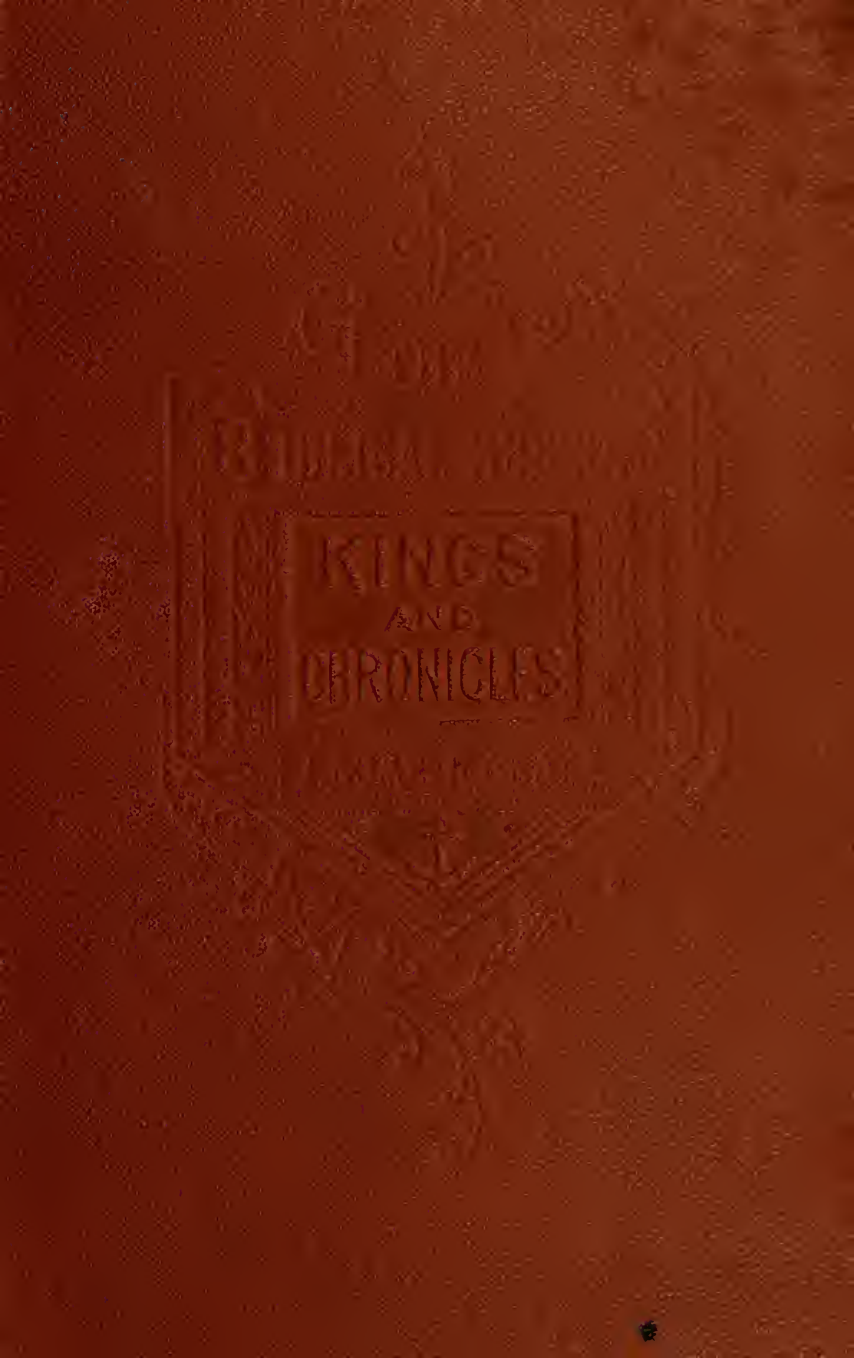
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THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

Introduction.

I. Title, VARIOUS. Prob. they derived their name fr. initial words **va-**Melech David = "now King David" (*Origen*) as the Bk. of Genesis does. In the LXX. they are called ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΩΝ = *reigns* or kingdoms: of wh. it calls Sam. the first and second, and these the third and fourth. In the Vulgate it is *Liber Regum tertius;* secundum Hebrœus, Liber Malachim: = "the third book of Kings; according to the Hebrews, the first book of Malachim." Old Syriac has—"Here follows the book of the Kings who flourished among the ancient people; and in this are also exhibited the history of the prophets, who flourished in their times." **II. Author.** Of this nothing *certain* is known. Prob. as "memoirs of their own times were written by several of the prophets for the use of their kingdom, the present books were compiled fr. these records by Jeremiah or Ezra" (*Angus*). In favour of this view, wh. is advocated by Havernich, is Jewish tradition. (1) The hist. reaches the liberation of Jehoiachim fr. Babylon; ab. 26 yrs. aft. destruc. of Jerasalem. (2) A late authorship is proved by freq. use of Chaldaisms (*De Wette*). (3) There is a remarkable affinity of style betw. Kings and Jeremiah (*Havernich*). (4) That the bks. were drawn up fr. var. documents by one hand is confirmed by the bks. themselves. (5) Work of eye-witness shown in vividness of descrip. (6) There are frequent appeals to official documents—Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel, *cf.* Est. ii. 23, vi. 1. (7) **Uniformity** of style, etc., indicates revision by one person (see *Angus*, *Horne*, *etc.*). **III. Time.** Not earlier than B.C. 562, when Jehoiachim was liberated; nor later than B.C. 536—the date of the return fr. the Babylonian exile—"for the author concludes with the deliverance of Jehoiachim as a joyful, hopeful event, and does not utter a syllable ab. the still more important and joyous matter, the return of the whole people, wh. is first mentioned in Ezra i. (*Bähr*). **IV. Authenticity.** (1) They contain many predictions. (2) They are cited as authentic by Jesus (Lu. iv. 25—27) and by His Apostles (Ac. vii. 47; Ro. xi. 2—4; Ja. v. 17, 18). (3) Received into the Canon by Jewish and Christian churches in every age. (4) Authenticity confirmed by testimony of profane writers (*Jos.*, *Antiq.* viii. 2—see instances of confirmation collected by *Eusebius*, *Prep. Evang. lib.* x. *Grotius, de Veritate*, iii. 16; also *Horne*, i. 141—166). **V. Period covered by this Book,** 126 yrs. *i.e.* fr. anointing of Sol. A.M. 2989, to death of Jehoshaphat, A.M. 3115.

Additional Note.—Other differences (in addition to discrepancies in the dates and the order of the events) are occasionally found, and refer chiefly to numbers and names. It is well known that the text of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles is in a worse condition than that of any other of the inspired writings: nor must we ascribe to the author what is really due to the error of copyists. These errors, it may be added, do not affect any article of faith or rule of life, and till we can rectify them they ought to be candidly acknowledged (*Angus*).

Synopsis.

(According to Bähr, in Lange.)

"The hist. of Israelitish monarchy *has three periods.*" [Of these periods only so much of Bähr's synopsis is here given as relates to this *first* Book of Kings. For the remainder, see synopsis of Second Book.]

Period I.—KINGDOM UNDER SOLOMON.

Sect. 1. *Solomon's elevation.*

(*a.*) Adonijah's plot .....i.
(*b.*) David's last words, etc. .....ii. 1—12
(*c.*) Sol.'s treatment of enemies...ii. 13—46

Sect. 2. *Begin. of Sol.'s reign.*

(*a.*) His marriage, etc. ..... iii. 1—28
(*b.*) His court and character.....iv. 1—34

Sect. 3. *Solomon's buildings.*

(*a.*) Treaty with Horam .....v. 1—18
(*b.*) Building of temple .....vi.
(*c.*) Building of palace, etc. .....vii.
(*d.*) Dedica. of temple ..... viii.
(*e.*) Sol.'s ships, etc. ..... ix.

Sect. 4. *Solomon's glory.*

(*a.*) Visit of Q. of Sheba.....x. 1—13
(*b.*) Splendour of kingdom .....x. 14—29

Sect. 5. *Solomon's fall and end.*

(*a.*) His religious unfaithfulness...xi. 1—13
(*b.*) His enemies and death.....xi. 14—43

Period II.—THE KINGDOM DIVIDED.

1ST EPOCH. *To reign of Ahab.*

Sect. 1. *Disruption of kingdom.*

(*a.*) Revolt of ten tribes.....xii. 1—24
(*b.*) Kingdom of Israel founded...xii. 25—33

Sect. 2. *Jeroboam's reign* (Israel).

(*a.*) Jeroboam warned .....xiii. 1—32
(*b.*) Jeroboam's death ..... xiv. 1—20

Sect. 3. *Rehoboam, etc.* (Judah).

(*a.*) Rehoboam's reign ..... xiv. 21—31
(*b.*) Abijam, Asa .....xv. 1—24

Sect. 4. *Nadab, Ahab* (Israel).

(*a.*) Nadab and Baasha.....xv. 25—xvi. 7
(*b.*) Eli, Zimri, Ahab.....xvi. 8—24

2ND EPOCH. *Ahab to Jehu.*

Sect. 1. *The Prophet Elijah.*

(*a.*) Cherith, Zarephath.....xvii.
(*b.*) Mount Carmel.....xviii.
(*c.*) Wilderness, Horeb, etc.

Sect. 2. *Acts of Ahab.*

(*a*) Victory over Syrians.....xx.
(*b.*) Relations with Naboth.....xxi.
(*c.*) Last exped. and death .....xxi. 1—40

Sect. 3. *Jehoshaphat* (Judah), *Ahaziah, and Joram* (Israel).

(*a.*) Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah ..... xxii. 41

(According to Horne.)

The First Book of Kings may be divided into two parts.

Part I.—HIST. OF REIGN OF SOLOMON.

Sect. 1. Last days of David.....i., ii. 1—11
Sect. 2. To building of temple .....ii. 12—46, iii., iv.
Sect. 3. Prepar. for building.....v.
Sect. 4. Building of temple, etc. .....vi., vii.
Sect. 5. Dedication of temple .....viii.
Sect. 6. Rest of reign of Sol. ..... ix.—xi.

Part II.—HISTORY OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

Sect. 1. Rehoboam and div. of kingdom...xii.
Sect. 2. Rehoboam, Jeroboam.....xiii., xiv
Sect. 3. Kings of Judah and Israel ...xv., xvi.
Sect. 4. Jehoshaphat, Ahab .....xvii., xxii.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

David's last illness

a "No Jewish monarch after David, excepting Solomon and Manasseh, exceeded 60 years." —*Spk. Com.*

b "Coverings and garments can only preserve and accumulate the heat actually existing in the body; but not supply that which is gone. Only a living body could impart living warmth."—*Keil.*

c Josephus, Ant. Jud. vii. 11.

d "Fr. *ab*, father; *shagag* to wander."—*Gesenius.*

e Jos. xix. 18; 1 Sa. xxviii. 4.

f Bähr.

g Roberts.

Adonijah's conspiracy

a Comp. 2 Sa. iii. 2, 4, xiii. 29, xviii. 14. Of *Chileab*, or Daniel, we have no later mention.

b "If a parent does not punish his sons, his sons will be sure to punish him." —*Dr. Guthrie.*

c Wordsworth.

d Spk. Com.; Stanley.

e Keil, Wordsworth, etc.

f Ewald.

g "Stone of serpents."

v. 5. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 282.

h W. Forsyth.

i Chateaubriand. "A college education shows a man how little other people

1—4. (1) **old,** about 70 years of age.*a* (2 Sa. v. 4, 5.) **clothes,** bed-clothes;*b* David was evidently keeping his bed. (2) **let there be,** *etc.*, this was the advice of the physicians.*c* Polygamy being permitted, this device was not morally wrong. The damsel was regarded as a concubine, or secondary wife. (3) **Abishag,** *father of error.*[d] **Shunammite,** of *Shunem*, now *Sulam*, village on an eminence in plain of Esdraelon, 5 m. S. of Tabor.*e* (4) **fair,** the best being selected bec. for a king.

Weakness and infirmity of old age (*vv.* 1—4).—They are—I. The universal human lot to which we must all consider ourselves appointed (Ps. xc. 10). II. They should loosen the bands which hold us to the temporal and perishable, and ripen us for eternity (2 Cor. iv. 17 *sq.*).*f*

A curious Eastern custom (*v.* 2).—This is by no means so uncommon a thing as people in England suppose. Men of seventy years of age and upwards often take a young virgin for the same purpose as David did, and no other. It is believed to be exceedingly healthful for an aged person thus to sleep. "In the hot season he is kept cool, and in the cold season warm, by sleeping with a young person; his withered body derives nourishment from the other." Thus, decrepit men may be seen having a young female in the house (to whom, generally, they are not married), and to whom they bequeath a considerable portion of their property.*g*

5—10. (5) **Adonijah,** Dav.'s fourth son, but prob. eldest now living.*a* **will be king,** forcing his *natural* right as eldest against the Divine right of Solomon. Comp. 2 Sa. xv. 1—6. (6) **not displeased,** *etc.*, the indulgence of David's family rule was one source of his family troubles.*b* (7) **Joab,** this man's faithfulness to Dav. had been most marked, but he never appears acting fr. high relig. motives: so here would not accept the Div. appointed Solomon. **Abiathar,** prob. jealous of the superior influence of Zadok.*c* (8) **Shimei,** probably Dav.'s brother Shimeah;*d* or the son of Elah, as ch. iv. 18.*e* **Rei,** *Ira*, as 2 Sa. xx. 26, or Raddai.*f* (9) **Zoheleth,***g* a stone not identified; for *En-rogel* see Jos. xv. 7. (10) **called,** invited.

Remonstrance with evil-doers (*v.* 6).—Adonijah, fourth son of David by Haggith (2 Sam. iii. 4), conspired for the crown. Much of evil that Adonijah did traceable to bad training. David erred in the treatment of his children. We learn—I. That remonstrance with evil-doers is an imperative duty. II. That it is a very difficult duty. III. That it is a much neglected duty.*h*

En-rogel (*v.* 9).—Siloam was a fountain under the walls of Jerusalem, east, between the city and the brook Kedron; it is supposed to be the same as the fountain En-rogel, or the Fuller's Fountain. The spring issues from a rock, and runs in a silent stream, according to the testimony of Jeremiah. It has a kind of ebb and flood, sometimes discharging its current like the fountain of Vaucluse; at others, retaining and scarcely suffering it to run at all. The pool, or rather the two pools of the same name, are quite close to the spring. They are still used for wash-

ing linen as formerly. The water of the spring is brackish, and has a very disagreable taste: people still bathe their eyes with it, in memory of the miracle performed on the man born blind." [i]

11—14. (11) **Nathan,** doing his duty as prophet of God, preventing any infringement of the Div. will. (12) Adonijah could only secure his position by putting both to death.[a] (13) **didst not thou,** on what occasion this was said is not known: it was after he received the promise. 2 Sa. vii. The spirit of the theocracy being retained, God designated whom He pleased as the new king. (14) **confirm,** support by further testimony.

Nathan the type of a true prophet (*vv.* 11—27).—I. Through his watchfulness and fidelity (Ez. xxxiii. 7): he is not silent when it was his duty to open his mouth (Is. lvi. 10). II. Through his wisdom and gentleness (Mat. x. 16). III. Through his earnestness and courage (Mat. x. 28). IV. How grand is this Nathan, how reproving to all who sleep when they should be wakeful, who are dumb when they should counsel, who flatter when they should warn.

Confirm thy words (*v.* 14).—The Hebrew has for *confirm*, "fill up." "I wish you to go and inform Tamban, that I will gladly go into court and *fill up* all his words." "My friend, do not believe that man's words."—"Not believe them! why, his words have been filled up by many people." "Well, you say you saw Muttoo turn his cattle last night into your rice-fields, what proof have you?"—"None, my lord; I was alone, and therefore have no one to fill up my words." "As Venase was coming through the cinnamon gardens, that notorious robber Kalloway met him, took from him his ear-rings, finger-rings, and five gold mohurs; but before he got off several people came up, who knew him well, so that there will be plenty of witnesses to fill up his words." [b]

15—21. (15) **chamber,** inner bed-chamber, to wh. the king was confined. (16) **obeisance,** indicating the state ceremonial kept up in the Hebrew court.[a] (17) **thy son,** not bringing herself in. (18) **reigneth,** only true that he was making the attempt. (19) **but Sol.,** *etc.*, with this statement she intends to show that it was an antagonistic movement. Not a mere piece of jealousy. (20) **thou shouldst tell,** his right of fixing his successor was fully recognised.[b] (21) **offenders,** exposed to death, as guilty of a capital crime.

Bathsheba before the king (*vv.* 15—21).—She reminds him of his duty—I. Towards God, before whom he had sworn: vows to God, according to His will, must be kept. II. Towards the people whose well-being and whose woe were in his keeping:—responsibility of kings. III. Towards the wife and child whose happiness and life were at stake:—woe to the father through whose guilt wife and children, after his death, fall into contempt and wickedness.

Husbands saluted (*v.* 16).—When a husband goes on a journey, or when he returns, his wife, on seeing him, puts her hands together, and presents them to him as an act of obeisance. When she has an important request to make, she does the same thing; and it is surprising to see the weakness of him who pretends to be the stronger vessel, for, under such circumstances, she will gain almost anything she wants. Hence, the force of

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know." — *Haliburton.*

Nathan informs Bathsheba

a "Cassander put to death Roxana, the widow of Alexander the Great, at the same time with her son, the young Alexander." — *Justin* xv. 2.

Cambyses, King of Persia, slew his brother Smerdis out of envy because he could draw a stronger bow than himself or any of his followers.

"I am the most dubious man in the world about my own judgment, and will stickle for nothing, excepting to live and to trust in my Lord." *Berridge.*

b Roberts.

Bathsheba informs David

a Comp. Esth. v. 1, 2.

b "Such right of selecting one among a number of sons is in the East recognised, and even now exercised." —*Jamieson.*

"The Shah of Persia, at the beginning of this century, had 60 sons, all brought up by their mothers with the hope of succeeding." — *Morier*, thro' *Stanley.*

"Nothing lovelier can be found in woman, than to study household good, and good works in

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her husband to promote." — *Milton.*

Take your wife's first advice, but not her second.— *English Proverb.*

[c] *Roberts.*

Nathan confirms Bathsheba's words

[a] Comp. v. 7, 19; 1 Chr. xxv. 1.

If thou bearest slight provocations with patience, it shall be imputed unto thee for wisdom; and if thou wipest them from thy remembrance, thy heart shall feel rest, thy mind shall not reproach thee.

"It is time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss." — *Shakespeare.*

David promises that Solomon shall succeed him

[a] Ju. viii. 19; Ru. iii. 13; 1 Sa. xiv. 39, xix. 6, xxviii. 10; 2 Sa. xv. 21; Ho. iv. 15; Jer. iv. 2, v. 2. For Dav.'s addition comp. 1 Sa. xxv. 34; 2 Sa. iv. 9.

v. 29. *J. Killenbeck, Ss.* 241.

"If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly."—*Shakespeare.*

[b] *J. Foster.*

David orders Solomon to be proclaimed

[a] v. 38; 2 Sa. viii. 18, xv. 18, xx. 7—23.

their popular proverb, "The woman who regularly makes obeisance to her husband, can make it rain whenever she pleases." When Bathsheba made her obeisance to the king, he asked, "What wouldest thou?" but the Hebrew has this, "What to thee?" This accords with the idiom of the Tamul language. Thus it will be asked of a person who stands with his hands presented to a great man, *ummak-enna*, "To thee what?" If speaking of a third person, *avanuk-enna*, "To him what?" or, literally, "Him to what?"[c]

22—27. (22) **came in,** as arranged, *v.* 14. (23) Another illus. of court manners. (24) **hast thou said?** in orig. not a question. Nathan assumes that Adon. must have obtained permission. (25) **captains,**[a] indic. that some officers had joined Joab and Adon. (26) **not called,** so making his act very suspicious. (27) **not shewed it,** to his prophet counsellor his intention ought surely to have been made known.

David and Nathan.—I. Happy is the king who has at hand a prophet of God who will not shrink from the duty of his holy calling. II. Happy is the king who is ready to hear the prophet even though his message be unpalatable. III. Happy is the man who, whatever his station, will learn a practical lesson from this history.

Some noted conspiracies.—Waltheof against William the Conqueror, 1074; Odo against William II., 1088; against Henry II. by his Queen, 1173; Barons against Henry III., 1258; against Henry IV., 1400; Earl of Cambridge against Henry V., 1415; Lambert Simnel (1487) and Perkin Warbeck against Henry VIII., 1492; Babbington against Elizabeth, 1586; Sindercombe against Oliver Cromwell, 1656; Fifth Monarchy men against Charles II., 1661; Meal Tub, 1679; Rye House, 1683; Bishop of Ely to restore James II., 1691; Assassination Plot, 1696; Lovat against Queen Ann, 1703; Cato Street, 1820.

28—31. (28) **call me,** Bathsheba had left the room on Nathan's entering. (29) **sware,** the solemn oath he took is given in this *v.* and the next. **as the Lord liveth,** the usual Heb. oath.[a] (30) **do,** take instant action. It was to this that they hoped to arouse him. (31) This obeisance was more profound than that recorded in *v.* 16.

David's decision (*vv.* 28—37).—I. His oath, *vv.* 29, 30. is an evidence of his firm faith in the Divine promise. II. His command is a living proof of the truth of his word, Is. xl. 31, and Ps. xcii. 15 *sq.*

Necessity of decision.—Without it, a human being, with powers at best but feeble, and surrounded by innumerable things tending to perplex, to divert, and to frustrate their operations, is indeed a pitiable atom, the sport of divers and casual impulses. It is a poor and disgraceful thing not to be able to reply with some degree of certainty, to the simple questions, What will you be? What will you do?[b]

32—37. (32) Observe that the three orders of the state were represented, priests, prophets, and military. **Benaiah,** 2 Sa. xx. 23, xxiii. 20—23. (33) **the servants,** or body-guard, Cherethites and Pelethites,[a] who remained faithful. **mine own mule,** this no one but the king might mount. Sol.'s riding on it, surrounded by those mentioned *v.* 32, would prove that his

movement had David's sanction. **Gihon,**[b] prob. *Siloam.* (34) **trumpet,**[c] a loud proclamation. Comp. heralding of a new king now. (35) **my throne,** on wh. Dav. himself would never sit again. (36) **amen,** solemn affirmation : Nu. v. 22. (37) **as the Lord,** *etc.*,[d] comp. Ge. xxvi. 3, 24, xxviii. 15, etc.

God save the king (*v.* 34).—I. The peculiar privileges of kings do not exempt them from the need of salvation. II. The special dangers of kings render salvation the more needful. III. Who can save princes, but the King of kings by whom they reign? IV. If He save them their throne is secure and their subjects happy. V. He will save them only as they serve Him. VI. Subjects should honour the king and pray for him.

True loyalty.— Remember
We are but subjects, Maximus : obedience
To what's done well, and grief for what's done ill,
Is all we can call ours ; the hearts of princes
Are like the temples of the gods ; pure incense,
Until unhallow'd hands defile the offerings,
Burns ever there ; we must not put them out,
Because the priests that touch those sweets are wicked.[e]

38—40. (38) **went down,**[a] *v.* 33. (39) **horn of oil,** 1 Sa. xvi. 1. For the oil, *see* Ex. xxx. 22. **tabernacle,** that one at wh. Zadok ministered,[b] and of wh. he had authority. (40) **came up after,** indic. a general acceptance of Solomon. **pipes,** flutes: some would trans. "dancing in dances,"[c] but with insufficient reason. **earth rent,** better, rang again, resounded. A strong figure.

The typical in Solomon's elevation to the sovereignty.—I. He is established in spite of all machinations against him, Ps. ii. 2 ; He. v. 5. II. He is anointed with oil from the sanctuary, Is. lxi. 1 ; Lu. iv. 18. III. He makes his entry as prince of peace amid the jubilee and praise of the people, Zech. ix. 9 ; Matt. xxi. 1 *sq.*

Divine right.—In February, 1782, a body of delegates from the Parliament of Ireland waited on his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to present him with an address, beseeching him to take on himself the government of that kingdom, as regent, during his majesty's incapacity. A few days afterwards they had the honour of dining with his royal highness at Carlton House. There were also present, the Dukes of York and Cumberland, the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire, Earl Fitzwilliam, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, etc., to the number of thirty-six. The party was most happily convivial, to which the engaging manners of the prince not a little contributed. On the company's rising, his royal highness insisted on the *landlord's bottle ;* this meeting with some little objection, was afterwards assented to from an observation of Mr. Burke, who said "that though he was an enemy in general to indefeasible right, yet he thought the prince in his own house had a right to rule *jure de vino.*"[d]

41—45. (41) **sound of trumpet,** Joab would notice this as his office gave him the control of the public trumpet. (42) **Jonathan,** the messenger, swift runner, as 2 Sa. xv. 36, xvii. 15—21. **valiant,**[a] worthy, virtuous. (43) **verily,** *i.e.* it is a fact, and an alarming one for us. (44) Comp. *vv.* 32—35. (45) **city rang,** comp. form of the fig. in *v.* 40.

b "Prob. ancient name of the valley called afterwards the Tyropœum, wh. ran fr. the present Damascus gate, by Siloam, into the Kedron vale."—*Spk Com.*

c "A great long prob. bent (*Rabbins* say straight) horn, that gave a far-sounding note."—*Keil.*

d "No good father is jealous of his son, but desires to see his children more famous than himself."—*Theodoret.* through *Wordsworth.*

e Beaumont.

Solomon is proclaimed

a "If we go from Zion to Gihon westward, we first descend a slope, and then ascend a gradual elevation; and this slope was prob. in former times more considerable."—*Robinson.*

b "Priest of sanctuary at Gibeon."—*Stanley. Keil, Spk. Com.* suggest the new tent erected by David on Zion.

c LXX. ; *Ewald. v.* 39. *W. Sewell, Par. Ser.* 30.

"Unless the people can be kept in total darkness, it is the wisest way for the advocates of truth to give them full light."—*Whately.*

d Percy Anec.

Adonijah hears of it

a Prov. xii. 4; 1 Ki. i. 52.

"No doubt at this feast there was many a

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health drunken to Adonijah many a confident boast of their prospering design, many a scorn of the despised faction of Solomon; and now, for their last dish (*v.* 49) is served up astonishment, and fearful expectation of a just revenge."—*Bp. Hall.*
b Rutherford.

the fear of Adonijah
v. 48. *J. Orton, Wks.* i. 427; *Bp. Hall, Cont.*
a J. Orton.
"The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made themselves; the liberty of a private man in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and of his country."—*Cowley.*
"If a man is not rising up to be an angel, depend upon it he is sinking downward to be a devil. He cannot stop at the beast."—*Coleridge.*
b Percy Anec.

Solomon's clemency to Adonijah
z Ps. cxviii. 27.

b Taking sanctuary is a common custom of nations, but has no support in the Mosaic law.
c "Sol. looks upon Adon.'s fleeing to the altar as a sign of repentance."—*Kell.*

Frustration of the schemes of Adonijah (note Job. v. 12).—I. The intelligence he obtains. II. The effect produced by it.

A throne for our King.—Now who is like to that royal King crowned in Zion? When shall I get a seat for royal Majesty? If I could set him as far above the heavens, thousand thousands of heights devised by men and angels, I should think Him too low. His love hath neither brim nor bottom; His love is like Himself: it passeth all natural understanding. I go to embrace it with my arms; but it is as if a child would take the globe of sea and land in his two short arms. Blessed and holy is His name![b]

46—49. (46) **sitteth on,** Jon. had hardly waited to see this accomplished. He knew it was the intention, and by the time he spoke would be realised. With the spirit of a true spy he had gained a pretty full report. (47) **king bowed himself,** in agreement with them, and reverent response to their prayer. (48) **mine eyes,** *etc.*, an unusual thing, as kings generally pass before their successors take rule. (49) **afraid,** bec. set in position of rebels, and so in danger of their lives. Their scheme was check-mated.

Saints and their descendants (*v.* 48).—From the words of our text we note that it is a matter of great joy to aged Christians to leave their families prosperous, peaceful, and pious. I propose to—I. Illustrate this observation. 1. It is a pleasure to an aged dying Christian to leave his family in prosperous circumstances; 2. A greater pleasure to leave his descendants in unity; 3. The greatest joy to leave them pious. II. Show why such a prospect gives so much joy. This joy arises from—1. Their natural love to their descendants: 2. The concern which they feel for the honour of God; 3. Their prospects of meeting them again in heaven.[a]

Promotion.—In 1781 a striking instance occurred of the attention which his majesty paid to the services and rewards of his servants. Lord Amherst presenting to the king a packet of army commissions for his signature, his majesty, on looking over the list, observed an officer appointed captain over an old lieutenant, and inquiring the reason, was answered by his lordship, "He cannot buy." The name struck the king, and before he signed the commissions, he turned to one of those large folios, of which he had a number, in his own handwriting, and presently finding the name of the lieutenant, and some memorandums of his private life, he immediately ordered him to be promoted to the vacant company.[b]

50—53. (50) **horns,** Ex. xxvii. 2, xxx. 2, xxxviii. 2, used for binding the sacrifice.[c] **altar,** we cannot be sure wh., but the more likely is that in the tabernacle on Mt. Zion.[b] (51) **not slay,** Adon., by his action, acknowledges that his life is forfeited. (52) **worthy,**[c] *v.* 42. **wickedness,** secret rebelliousness, designs to assert his supposed right of succession. (53) **go to thine house,** Sol. could not give him a place at court, that might involve the corruption of his officers. He simply gives him his liberty.

Confusion of Adonijah.—I. He fears Solomon:—he who does not fear the Lord, must at last become afraid of men. II. He flies to the altar and begs for mercy:—he who said he would be king, calls himself Solomon's servant. Ostentation and boasting, as a rule, end in cowardice and cringing.

Example of clemency (*v.* 53).—Two patricians, having conspired against Titus the Roman Emperor, were discovered, convicted, and sentenced to death by the senate; but that noble prince, having sent for them, admonished them in private of their folly in aspiring to the empire, exhorted them to be satisfied with the rank in which by Providence they had been placed, and offered them anything else which he had the power to grant. At the same time, he despatched a messenger to the mother of one of them, who was then at a great distance, and under deep concern about the fate of her son, to assure her that her son was not only alive, but out of danger. He invited them the same night to his table; and having, the next day, placed them by him at a show of gladiators, when the weapons of the combatants were, according to custom, presented to him, he desired them to survey them.[d]

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"To revenge a wrong is easy, usual, and natural, and, as the world thinks, savours of noleness of mind; but religion teaches the contrary, and tells us it is better to neglect than to requite it."—*J. Beaumont.*

d Stretch.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—6. (1) **charged,** gave final instructions. (2) **go the way,** Jos. xxiii. 14. **a man,**[a] this counsel intimates that Sol. was but a youth when called to reign. (3) **charge,** *etc.*,[b] as given De. xvii. 18—20. **prosper,** or, as marg., *act wisely:* see Jos. i. 7. (4) **continue his word,**[c] keep up for a new generation his promise. (5) **Joab . . me,**[d] 2 Sa. xviii. 14, specially in Dav.'s mind. He fully mentions, however, only Joab's public offences. **blood,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. xx. 10. (6) **hoar head,**[e] the description of an aged man *by a poet.*

Human equality (*vv.* 1—3).—We have here the dying charge of an old and experienced king to a young one. The lesson is that all men are equal in the sight of God: because kings even are not exempt from—I. Human mortality. II. Human frailty. III. Human responsibility. A second lesson may be learned from the same text, namely, that obedience to the will of God inevitably issues in prosperity, in the best sense of the word.[f]

The two eagles.—David and Solomon may be compared to two eagles, soaring far above other men. David did so in devotion, and Solomon in wisdom. Against both these favoured ones the cruel fowler aimed an arrow, and each arrow went direct to its mark; and, at a moment when least expected, both were brought down from their lofty elevation to shame and reproach. David fell to the ground bleeding, and lay with soiled plumage grovelling in the dust. He was then seized by the enemy, chained for a time a prisoner with multitudes of ignoble birds, who found malicious pleasure in making sport of him. But the hand of mercy, after a while, broke the chain, healed the wounds inflicted, and soon we behold him soaring again as of old, combining, as he had often done, the lofty flight of the eagle with the cheerful song of the lark. He soared higher and sung sweeter than ever. Hark to the melody: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases!" His last words were, "Blessed be His glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory." "Jehovah hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." Solomon, when wounded, fell into the dead sea of sensuality; he appeared to sink

David's death

a Comp. 1 Ti. iv. 12; 2 Ti. ii. 1, 3.

b "*Statutes,* definite rules and usages; *commandments,* expressions of the Div. will; *judgments,* laws belonging to the civil government; *testimonies,* so'emn declarations of the will of God against sin."—Partly fr. *Keil.*

c 2 Sa. vii. 12, 13; Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, cxxxii. 12.

d "We must not expect Gospel morality fr. the saints of the Old Testament. They were only the best men of their several ages and nations."—*Spk. Com.*

e Ge. xlii. 38; Pr. xx. 26.

f 2. *J. Rees, Disc.* i. 90.

vv. 2, 3. *Dr. E. Maynard,* 114.

f F. Wagstaff. The death-bed of a saint ofttimes resembles the setting sun,

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whose rays are the brightest when it is nearest the horizon.

"The tongues of dying men enforce attention, like deep harmony." — *Shakespeare.*

David's burial

a "Four miles out of Jerus. a celebrated caravanserai for travellers into Egypt was founded by Chimbam, on the property granted to him by David out of the paternal patrimony at Bethlehem."—See the rest of this note, *Stanley, Jew. Ch.* ii. 161.

b Ac. ii. 29.

vv. 10, 11. *B. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 296.

c R. Liswil, B.A.

"We make ourselves more injuries than are offered to us; they many times pass for wrongs in our own thoughts, that were never meant so by the heart of him that speaketh. The apprehension of wrong hurts more than the sharpest part of the wrong done." — *Feltham.*

reign of Solomon

Adonijah's request

a The wives of a deceased sovereign were under

beneath the dark billows, but we believe he rose again. His after history, indeed, unlike that of his royal father, can only be dimly traced. We have good reason to conclude that a lifeboat was launched from the harbour of promise (2 Sam. vii. 14, 15), which saved him from being drowned in perdition. We listen, and hear not joyful songs like David's, but some mournful complainings and loud lamentations which indicate life, but speak of wounds and weakness still remaining. We have the Book of Ecclesiastes; but we hear no more canticles full of ardent love. Still we gather, from his last mournful utterances, the solemn and needed counsel: FEAR GOD—FEAR TO SIN.

7—11. (7) **sons of Barzillai,**[a] 2 Sa. xix. 37—40; Je. xli. 17. **so they came,** *i.e.* entertain them, for they, kindly and thoughtfully, entertained me. (8) **Shimei,** 2 Sa. xvi. 5—14. He offered gratuitous insult to the king, when he needed sympathy. **I will not,** stress on I. Temporary, not complete, immunity fr. punishment had been given. (9) Sol. understood this to mean, seek to gain opportunity of taking vengeance. (10) **in the city,**[b] an exception to rule being made in his case. (11) Comp. 2 Sa. v. 4, 5; 1 Chr. iii. 4, xxix. 26, 27.

The sins of godly men (*vv.* 8, 9).—There are three ways in which David may have been influenced in giving this dying injunction to his son. I. As the agent, unconscious or otherwise, of Divine justice. II. By a conscientious desire to administer human justice, according to the will of God. III. As prompted by revenge. And this alternative we think the right one. With David as a man of God and Israel's lawgiver we must utterly disconnect this act, and attribute it entirely to a flaw in his character, which, at the last, reasserted its natural power in antagonism to Divine grace.[c]

Toussaint l'Ouverture.—When this chief first rose into power among the negroes, he gave one very pleasing earnest of his future character. The white people, especially the planters, were so odious, both from their former tyranny and the blood they had cruelly shed in the struggle to preserve their power, that the negroes, when they gained the ascendency, were disposed to give them no quarter. The master of Toussaint was one of the unfortunate planters, who, not having escaped in good time, was on the point of falling into the hands of the enraged negroes; but he had been formerly kind to Toussaint, and this was not to be forgotten. The grateful and generous man, at the risk of bringing the vengeance of the multitude on his own head, delivered his unhappy master privately out of their hands, and sent him on board a ship bound for America, then lying in the harbour. Nor was this all. He was not sent away without the means of subsistence; for this brave and generous negro found means to put on board secretly, for his use, a great many hogsheads of sugar, in order to support him in exile, till the same grateful hands should be able to send him a larger supply.

12—18. (12) **established,** by recognition and allegiance of all the tribes. (13) **peaceably,** with peaceful intentions. Adon.'s seeking the queen-mother looked suspicious. (14) **to say,** or ask. (15) This *v.* shows how his disappointment was rankling; and puts suspicion of a political design on his request. Tho' not seeking the throne, he wanted to win *public influence.*

(16) **deny,** lit. *turn not away my face.* (17) **Abishag,**[a] ch. i. 3. (18) **well,** expression indic. doubtfulness in her mind.

An influential ambassador (*v.* 18).—1. It is here implied that Solomon's love for his mother was so great that he could scarcely deny her request. II. It is here seen that a wily man takes advantage of that well-known affection to secure his own ends. Learn that the enemy may seek our hurt by means of our dearest relationships.

Deny me not (*v.* 16).—The Hebrew has for "deny me not," "turn not away my face." When a man has gained the attention of the person to whom he wishes to speak, he generally says *oru-kealve-māteram*, i.e. one request only, to show he is not going to give him much trouble, and to ask for many things. Adonijah said to Bathsheba, "turn not away my face;" under similar circumstances it would be said here, "Ah! do not make my face ashamed—Do not put away my face—Reject not my face."[b]

19—25. (19) **rose up,** showing respect due to the queen-mother.[a] **right hand,** the place of honour, Ps. cx. 1. (20) **small,** Bathsheba did not judge its political importance. (21) As *v.* 17. There may have been a real affection bet. the parties. (22) **ask . . kingdom,** rightly or wrongly Sol. suspected the beginnings of a plot. (23) **God do so,** as Ru. i. 17. (24) **made me a house,** already Sol. had a son to succeed him. (25) **Benaiah,** chief executioner, as cap. of body-guard.[b]

Solomon's respect for his mother (*v.* 19).—I. Observe the courtly grace of the king: he rose—bowed—sat. II. Note the filial respect of this royal son: he gave his mother a seat on his right hand. III. Learn hence how mothers should be treated; and especially by those who have risen to wealth and power.

Widows of kings.—The wives of the late king (according to the customs of the East) belonged to his successor, and were never married to any under a crowned head. Abishag was, doubtless, a beautiful woman, and by her near relation to David might have a powerful interest at court; Adonijah might therefore hope, by this marriage, to strengthen his pretensions to the crown, or, at least, to lay the foundation for some future attempt, upon a proper opportunity, either if Solomon should die, and leave a young son, not able to contest the point with him, or, if at any time, he should happen to fall under the people's displeasure, as his father had done before him. This might be Adonijah's design, and Solomon, accordingly, might have information of it. But, supposing that his brother's design was entirely innocent, yet since his request (according to the customs then prevailing) was confessedly bold and presumptuous, and had in it all the appearance of treason, it was none of Solomon's business to make any further inquiry about it, or to interpret the thing in his brother's favour. It was sufficient for him that the action was in itself criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state, for it is by their actions, and not intentions, that all offenders must be tried. Adonijah indeed, had he lived under our constitution, would have had a fair hearing before conviction. But we ought to remember, that in the kingdoms of the East the government was absolute, and the power of life or death entirely in the prince: so that Solomon, without the formality of any process, could pronounce his brother dead; and because he conceived that in cases of this nature delays were dangerous, might,

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the protection of his successor, but properly should remain widows.

v. 13. "Ambitious and power-loving people do not scruple to reach the ends which they cannot obtain by open force, by means that are mortifying to their pride; when they can no longer demand, they beg." *b Roberts.*

Bathsheba prefers it to the king

a "The dignity of king's mother is a state office, to which certain revenues are attached. The holder has a separate palace or court, as well as possesses great influence in public affairs; and as the dignity is held for life, it sometimes happens, in consequence of deaths, that the person enjoying it may not be related to the reigning sovereign by natural maternity."—*Jamieson.*

b Mk. vi. 27.

"When visited by a superior, the Persian rises hastily, and meets his guest nearly at the door of the apartment. On the entrance of an equal, he just raises himself from his seat, and stands nearly erect; but to an inferior he makes the motion only of rising."—*Morier.*

c Stackhouse.

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send immediately and have him despatched, though we cannot but say that it had been much more to his commendation had he showed more clemency, and spared his life.[c]

the deposition of Abiathar

26–30. (26) **Abiathar,** Sol. promptly acted concerning all likely to be interested in Adon.'s scheme. and so stamped out the very beginnings of conspiracy. He deposed Abiathar fr. his public office. (27) **fulfil,** 1 Sa. ii. 31, 35. (28) **tidings,** *etc.*, the alarm of Joab indicates guilty knowledge. **altar,** prob. the one at Gibeon.[a] (29) **fall upon him,**[b] even the sanctuary might afford no protection to a murderer. (30) **die here,** let us hope, that in this he gave signs of penitence and piety.

Royal mercy and justice (*vv.* 26, 27).—I. This history brings before us a priest meddling in state matters, and who had conspired (*see* i. 7) to depose the king; and whose former conduct laid him under fresh suspicions. II. It also shows us a king who in justice can punish an offender, while mercy seeks a reason for clemency. III. It brings before us, as a reason for the forgiveness of injuries, the good the offender may have done in former times to those who are dear to us. IV. It shows us, further, how inevitably the word of God is fulfilled.

Deposition of Abiathar.—How far the high-priest Abiathar was concerned in the plot against Solomon the sacred history does not particularly inform us; but such was the reverence paid to the sacerdotal character that Solomon would have hardly dared to depose such a one from his office had not the constitution of the nation authorised him so to do. The kings in the East, indeed, soon found out ways to make themselves absolute; but it looks as if, at the first establishment, the king was at the head of the Hebrew republic, and the high-priest his subject, and in all civil affairs submitted to his correction: insomuch that, when any one abused the power of his office, to the prejudice of the commonweal, or endangering the king's person, the king might justly deprive him of his honours and titles, of his temporalities and emoluments, and even of life itself. And therefore, when Abiathar by his conspiracy had merited all this, whatever was dependent on the crown (as all the revenues of this place, as well as the liberty of officiating in it, were dependent) Solomon might lawfully take from him; but the sacerdotal character, which he received from God, and to which he was anointed, this he could not alienate: and therefore we may observe that, after his deprivation, and even when Zadok was in possession of his place, he is nevertheless still mentioned under the style and title of the priest. The truth is, there is a great deal of difference between depriving a man of the dignity, and of the exercise of his function, in such a determinate place: between taking from him an authority that was given him by God, and the profits and emoluments arising from it, which were originally the gift of the crown. The former of these Solomon could not do, and the latter, it is probable, he was the rather incited to do out of regard to the prophecy of Samuel, wherein he foretold Eli (from whom Abiathar was descended) that he would translate the priesthood from his to another family. as he did in the person of Zadok, who was of the house of Eleazar, even as Eli was of that of Ithamar: so that, by this means, the priesthood reverted to its ancient channel.[c]

[a] Comp. 1 Ki. iii. 4; 1 Chr. xvi. 39.

[b] "The white-headed warrior of a hundred fights, with his hands still clasping the consecrated structure, was executed by the hands of his ancient comrade."—*Stanley.*

vv. 28–46. *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

v. 30. "What good is there in dying in a sacred place if one has not a sanctified heart and pure conscience?"

"As it is said that ferocious animals are disarmed by the eye of man, and will dare no violence if he but steadily look at them, so it is when right looks upon wrong. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you; offer him a bold front, and he runs away. He goes, it may be, uttering threats of rage, but yet he goes."—*Bushnell.*

All your life you will stand in fear of death unless you are freed from him who has the power of death.

"In general, treachery, though at first sufficiently cautious, yet in the end betrays itself."—*Livy.*

[c] *Stackhouse.*

31—35. (31) **bury him,**[a] honourably; as a criminal, executed by hand of justice, he had no claim to burial rites. **take away,**[b] the penalty of unavenged crime being regarded as still hanging over the negligent party. (32) **not knowing,** 2 Sa. iii. 31—39, xx. 8—13. (33) Comp. Dav.'s curse, 2 Sa. iii. 29. (34) **wilderness,** prob. of Judah. (35) **host,** entire army, advancing Benaiah to be commander-in-chief.

The terrible end of Joab (*v.* 34).—I. He dies conscious of his guilt, without peace and pardon. II. Even in the very jaws of death he is defiant, rough, and proud. III. He does not leave the world like a hero, but like a criminal.

The interment of Joab (*v.* 34).—This refers to the interment of Joab, who was slain by the hands of Benaiah. It is probable that Joab had built this house for the purpose of being buried in it, as it is not reasonable to suppose that he would erect a house in such a place to be the habitation of the living. Children or parents often build a house in a retired place, over, or for the remains of the dead; and the rest of the family also when they die are buried there. In some of these places may be seen the funeral car, or palanquin, in which the corpse was taken to its long home, suspended from the roof. At the anniversary of the death of a father, mother, or any other near relation, the friends go thither to perform the annual rites for the benefit of their manes. Such a house, so long as the descendants of the dead interred there have the power to prevent it, will never be allowed to go to decay.[c]

36—41. (36) **called for Shimei,**[a] he had committed no overt act to bring him under penalty, but as a disaffected person, needed to be restrained and watched. (37) **brook Kidron,** this was to be the limit of his parole.[b] (38) **good,** cheerfully accepting the easy and merciful condition. (39) **Achish,** comp. 1 Sa. xxvii. 2. **Gath,** Jos. xi. 22.[c] (40) **rose,** in thoughtless haste and excitement. (41) **come again,** wh. indicated no evil intent.

The end of Shimei (*v.* 40).—I. Review former events of his life. II. The magnanimity of David confirmed by Solomon (*v.* 36). III. Still inconvenient results follow his past conduct. IV. A churlish man, was most probably a churlish master; his servants ran away. V. He was so covetous as to forget prudence. VI. Remarkable providence in the direction taken by the fugitive servant—Gath a city of Philistines. How likely was Shimei's visit to arouse suspicion.

Many days (*v.* 38).—Ask a man how long he has lived in the village, or a priest how long he has officiated in the temple, the answer is not a long time, or many years, but *veagu-nāl*. i.e. many days. "How long were they digging that tank?"—"Ah! many days." "Who built that temple?"—"Ah! my lord, how can I tell? it has been built many days." "I hear you were at the taking of Seringapatam, when the great Tippoo Saib was slain."—"Yes, I was." "How long is that since?"—"I cannot really tell, but many days."[d]

42—46. (42) **to swear,** not fully stated (*v.* 38). (43) **oath of the Lord,** taken before the Lord; and using the name of the Lord. (41) **heart is privy to,** or aware of. The broken promise removed the pledged protection, and brought him under

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the execution of Joab

a "The body was buried in funeral state at his own property in the hills overhanging the Jordan valley."—*Stanley.*
b "God himself had declared that 'blood defileth the land,' and that the land could not be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Nu. xxxv. 33."—*Wordsworth.* "I do think that you might pardon him, and neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy."—*Shakespeare.*
c Roberts.

liberty of Shimei limited

a "The object, apparently was to keep Shimei under the immediate eye of the government."—*Spk. Com.*
b "Such strictness was necessary; for, to a man who was the object of political suspicion, freedom to go beyond the assigned limit whenever he liked, would quite have nullified the design of placing him under *surveillance* in the metropolis."—*Kitto.*
c "The servants were perhaps encouraged to run away by this prohibition on their master."—*Kitto.*
d Roberts.

the execution of Shimei

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penalty of former sin. (45) **blessed,** as a vindicator of righteousness. In beginning of his reign an impression of the firmness and vigour of his rule must be made. (46) **established**[a] (Pr. xxv. 5).

Shimei put to death (*v.* 44).—In considering the subject of retributive justice, we shall show—I. How it should be exercised by men. 1. By men in their individual capacity not at all; 2. But, as public men, we may and must execute justice on those who transgress the laws. II. How it will be exercised by God. 1. Here; 2. Hereafter.[b]

Often reproved, suddenly destroyed.—There are many who say, "When I come to die I shall be on my death-bed, and then I shall say, 'Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.'" I remember an aged minister telling me a story of a man whom he often warned, but who always said to him, "Sir, when I am dying I shall say, 'Lord, have mercy on me,' and I shall go to heaven as well as anybody else." Returning home from market one night under the influence of liquor, he guided his horse with a leap right over the parapet of a bridge into the river. The last words he was heard to utter were a most fearful imprecation; and in the bed of the river he was found dead, killed by the fall.[c]

a "This rapid suppression of all resistance was known in the formal language of the time as the 'establishment' or 'enthronisation' of Solomon."—*Stanley.*

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Such firmness of resolution and such vigour of action but few had expected beforehand from the young prince."—*Ewald.*

v. 46. *T. Bradbury,* ii. 177.

c *Spurgeon.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter

1—4. (1) **made affinity,** national alliance, sealed with union of the two reigning families. Whether he had any right to marry an Egyptian is much disputed.[a] **Pharaoh,** his private name is not certainly known, either Psusennes II. or his predecessor Psinaces. (2) **only,** *etc.*, put to intimate the peril of their so doing. (3) **statutes,** both those wh. David enjoined, and those in wh. Da7. himself walked. (4) **Gibeon**[b] (Jos. xxi. 17).

Solomon's sacrificial festivity (*vv.* 2—4).—I. When he celebrated it. 1. At beginning of his reign; 2. To return thanks for past help of God; 3. To implore its continuance. II. Where he kept it. 1. Upon the high-place at Gibeon; 2. No temple built as yet. Learn:—The grateful and humble heart will always find a place for praise and prayer.

The great high-place (*v.* 4).—An exception has been taken to the account of the great quantity of sacrifices which he is said to have offered on one altar only; but without recurring to any miracle for this, or without supposing this fire, which originally came from heaven, was more strong and intense than any common fire, and therefore, after the return from the captivity, the altar (as some observe) was made larger, because there wanted this celestial flame: without any forced solution like this, we have no reason to think that all these sacrifices were offered in one day. The king, we may imagine, upon one of the great festivals went in procession with his nobles to pass his devotion at Gibeon, where was the tabernacle and the brazen altar which Moses had made. Each of the great festivals lasted for seven days; but Solomon might stay much longer at Gibeon, until, by the daily oblations, a thousand burnt-offerings were consumed; and, at the conclusion of this course of devotion, he might offer up his ardent prayer to God for wisdom, and God, for the confirmation of his faith, might appear to him in a dream by

a "The position taken by many that this princess became a proselyte, must be inferred partly fr. the circumstance that she is neither (ch. xi.) named among the wives of Sol. who practised idolatry, nor is a single trace of Egyp. idol. to be found during the whole of his reign; and partly fr. charac. of Sol. at this time."—*Keil.*

b 2 Chr. i. 13.

See *J. Saurin, Disc Hist.* v. 175.

v. 3. The greatest and best thing that can be said of a man is, that "he loved the Lord."

night, and have that converse with him that the Scripture takes notice of.[c]

5—10. (5) **in a dream,**[a] this was the way of Div. communic. to Sol. *three times.* (6) **great kindness,** comp. ch. i. 48. (7) **little child,** strong fig. of Sol.'s sense of unfitness for such responsibilities. **go out or come in,** phrase for conduct myself. (8) **great people,** whose wise ruling is a great work. (9) **understanding,** *etc.*,[b] kingly qualities of judgment, prudence, and practical discernment; statesmanship. (10) **pleased,** bec. of its showing thoughtful sense of responsibility and a tone of true humility.

How to get rich (*v.* 5).—"Ask what I shall give thee." Observe, for the acquirement of the highest wealth, that "asking"—I. Is the simplest method. Only a word. II. Is the Divinely-appointed method (Ma. vii. 7; Mk. xiv. 38). III. Is the only method. Purchase is impossible. Deserts? We have none. IV. Is the certain method. It never has failed yet. V. Is a meritless method. VI. Is the abundantly-enforced method. Enforced by the whole Bible, by the story of God's acts, the promises and exhortations, the life and death of Jesus. VII. Has ever been the abundantly-successful method.[c]—*Solomon's choice* (*v.* 10).—I. The address which God made to Solomon when He said, "Ask what I shall give thee," He does in effect make to each of us, especially to the young. II. Though we need not the qualifications which Solomon required for his kingly office, yet we all need spiritual wisdom and understanding, and may therefore all imitate his example. III. God is pleased with those who make the choice and offer up the prayer of Solomon. Because—1. It is the effect of His grace; 2. It indicates opinions and feelings similar to His own; 3. It indicates humility; 4. It shows a benevolent concern for His glory, and for the happiness of their fellow-creatures; 5. It actually tends to promote His glory. IV. All who make this choice and adopt this prayer shall certainly be favoured with a wise and understanding heart.[d]—*I am but a little child* (*v.* 7).—Introduction. (1) Who is the little child that says this? Curiously, it is a full-grown man and a king. (2) What made him say it then? He was humble and distrustful of himself. Remember that, though you are "but a little child"—I. God notices you. II. He would have you pray. "*Ask* what I shall give thee." III. Yet you should ask Him for wisdom. IV. Yet, if you ask for wisdom, God will give it you and other things too.[e]—*S. S. address* (*v.* 7).—These words of Solomon the wise, spoken on his succeeding to the throne of David his father. At this time he was in the prime of life. What could he mean, this great man, by calling himself a little child? It was in view of all the duties, etc., of his high station. He felt as helpless as a little child in the presence of life's great work. His words remind us—I. That little children are very ignorant and inexperienced. They know not how to go out or come in, *i.e.* how to discharge their duty aright, how to conduct themselves as they should, how to suit words and deeds to times and seasons. II. That little children should feel and confess their ignorance. Little children are often proud, puffed up, think they know a great deal, imagine themselves wiser than their seniors. To feel one's ignorance a step to wisdom. He will try to learn who feels how little he knows. III. That little children should seek

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c Stackhouse.

Solomon's wise choice

a Ge. xv. 1, xxviii. 12, xxxvii. 5.

b One of the chief functions of the Oriental monarch is always to hear and decide causes.

"Though Sol.'s choice was made in a dream, we must regard it as springing fr. his will in some degree; and therefore as indicative of his moral character."—*Spk. Com.*

c R. A. Griffin.

"He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. He became wise bec. he had set his heart upon it."—*Stanley.*

"The prayer of Sol. related entirely to his office. For himself personally he asked nothing."—*Keil.*

d Dr. Payson.

v. 5. *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 444.

vv. 5—14. *J. Saurin*, viii. 26.

vv. 5—28. *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

vv. 6—9. *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Ks.* 72.

e J. Bolton

vv. 7—9. *A. Alison*, i. 41.

vv. 8, 9. *T. Scott, Vill. Disc.* 104.

v. 10. *J. Smith, Disc.* 81; *Dr. E. Payson, Wks.* iii. 405.

"Every man has two educations—that which is given to him, and the other

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that which he gives to himself. Indeed, all that is most worthy in a man, he must work out and conquer for himself. It is this that constitutes our real and best nourishment. What we are merely taught, seldom nourishes the mind like that which we teach ourselves."—*Tyman.*

wisdom from God (*see vv.* 9, 10). A wise heart is a heart disposed to seek knowledge and wisdom in the right way; asking God to strengthen memory and understanding, to guide steps and thoughts aright. The wise heart will seek the Divine blessing daily, that something may be learned every day. Learn:—1. Little children are especially ignorant of the way of life; need Christian instruction: religion is a very great matter for little people; 2. Little children should ask God to make them wise unto salvation; 3. Little children were once taken to the Saviour's arms: Jesus is the same now, and loves children still.[f]

Diffidence a sign of wisdom (*v.* 9).—The celebrated Aboo Yûsuph, in the reign of Caliph Hadee, was a very remarkable instance of that humility which distinguishes true wisdom. His sense of his own deficiences often led him to entertain doubts where men of less knowledge and more presumptiou were decided. It is related of this judge that on one occasion, after a very patient investigation of facts, he declared that his knowledge was not competent to decide upon the case before him. "Pray, do you expect," said a pert courtier, who heard this declaration, "that the caliph is to pay your ignorance?" "I do not," was the mild reply; "the caliph pays me and well for what I do know. If he were to attempt to pay me for what I do not know, the treasures of his empire would not suffice."[g]

[f] *Hive.*

"We are never deceived, we deceive ourselves."—*Goethe.*

[g] *Malcolm's Persia.*

God approves his choice

11—15. (11) **long life,** the thing judged most desirable, but mere personal good. **enemies,**[a] those opposing his rule. (12) **done,** *etc.*, Matt. vii. 7—11; Jas. iv. 3. (13) **also given,**[b] Matt. xiii. 12. **among the kings,** generally, not limiting the comparison to kings of Israel. (14) This promise was not fulfilled bec. Sol. failed in the condition.[c] (15) **dream,** as Ge. xli. 7. **to Jerus.,** renewing sacrifice at the tabernacle there as well as at Gibeon.[d]

Solomon's choice (*vv.* 11—14).—I. The choice of Solomon. His request was for a more abundant measure of wisdom. 1. Intellectual wisdom; 2. Spiritual wisdom. II. The instruction to be gathered from it. It clearly shows—1. That an ability to discharge our duty aright is the most desirable of all blessings; 2. That it is the gift of God alone; 3. That where a desire after it is supreme in the soul, God will signally honour and bless us. Address—(1) Those who are desirous of earthly honours; (2) Those who desire the approbation of their God.[e]

Solomon's humility (*v.* 7).—So said Solomon when he came to the kingdom of his father; and so say men here, though they be advanced in years, when they wish to speak of their incapacity for any performance. "What can I do in this affair? I am but a boy of yesterday's birth." When a man pleads for forgiveness, he says, "I am but a little child, it was my ignorance." Has a man insulted another by not bowing to him, or refusing to take off his sandals in his presence, or by the use of some improper expressions, those who go to intercede for him say, "Forgive him, sir, he is but an infant of yesterday." A person wishing to compliment a holy or learned person says, "I am but a little infant when compared with you."[f]

[a] 1 Ki. xi. 14—25.

[b] Mat. vi. 33; Lu. xii. 31.

[c] *Keil.* 1 Ki. xi. 42.

[d] 1 Ki. iii. 4.

vv. 11—14. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com* i. 466.

[e] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Wisdom consists chiefly in three things:—1. Knowledge to discern; 2. Skill to judge; 3. Activity to prosecute."—*T. Watson.*

"The first point of wisdom is to discern that which is false; the second, to know that which is true."—*Lactantius.*

[f] *Roberts.*

the cause of the two women

16—21. (16) **harlots,** Ge. xxxviii. 14, 15. **stood before,**[a] as those who seek a judicial decision. (17) **in one house,** their sad trade involved living by themselves. (18) **no stranger, so**

[a] "The mother

no witnesses could be brought. (19) **overlaid it,** lay on it during sleep; a cause of the death of many infants. (20) This is the woman's assumption. (21) **considered it,** looked at it again and again.

Justice in the old time (*v.* 16).—I. The judge. A king gave time from pleasure, etc., for administration of justice. II. The cause. A brothel quarrel between two prostitutes. It shows the wonderful freedom of access to the king. This a specimen of the causes of that time and place. In our times a prostitute would not be anxious to prove the living child hers.

An ingenious judgment.—A jeweller who carried on an extensive trade, and supplied the deficiences of one country by the superfluities of another, leaving his home with a valuable assortment of diamonds for a distant region, took with him his son and a young slave whom he had purchased in his infancy, and had brought up more like an adopted child than a servant. They performed their intended journey, and the merchant disposed of his commodities with great advantage; but while preparing to return, he was seized by a pestilential distemper, and died suddenly in the metropolis of a foreign country. This accident inspired the slave with a wish to possess his master's treasures; and relying on the total ignorance of strangers, and the kindness everywhere shown him by the jeweller, he declared himself the son of the deceased, and took charge of his property. The true heir of course denied his pretensions, and solemnly declared himself to be the only son of the defunct, who had long before purchased his opponent as a slave. The contest produced various opinions. It happened that the slave was a young man of comely person and of polished manners; while the jeweller's son was ill-favoured by nature, and still more injured in his education by the indulgence of his parents. This superiority operated in the minds of many to support the claims of the former; but since no certain evidence could be produced on either side, it became necessary to refer the dispute to a court of law. There, however, from a total want of proofs, nothing could be done. The magistrate declared his inability to decide on unsupported assertions in which each party was equally positive. This caused a report of the case to be made to the prince, who, having heard the particulars, was also confounded and at a loss how to decide the question. At length a happy thought occurred to the chief of the judges, and he engaged to ascertain the real heir. The two claimants being summoned before him, he ordered them to stand behind a curtain prepared for the occasion, and to project their heads through two openings, when, after hearing their several arguments, he would cut off the head of him who should prove to be the slave. This they readily assented to; the one from a reliance on his honesty, the other from a confidence of the impossibility of detection. Accordingly, each taking his place as ordered, thrust his head through a hole in the curtain. An officer stood in front with a drawn scimitar in his hand, and the judge proceeded to the examination. After a short debate, the judge cried out, "Enough, enough, strike off the villain's head!" And the officer, who watched the moment, leaped towards the two youths. The impostor, startled at the brandished weapon, hastily drew back his head; while the jeweller's son, animated by conscious security, stood unmoved. The judge immediately

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of the living child tells her tale with all the plaintiveness and particularity of truth."—*Stanley.*

"Perfect wisdom hath four parts, viz.: — wisdom, the principle of doing things aright; justice, the principle of doing things equally in public and private; fortitude, the principle of not flying danger, but meeting it; and temperance, the principle of subduing desires, and living moderately."—*Plato.*

"Learning falls far short of wisdom. . . . Knowledge is the treasure of the mind, but discretion is the key to it, without which it is useless. The practical part of wisdom is the best."—*Feltham.*

"There is not a man in the world but desires to be, or to be thought to be, a wise man; and yet if he considered how little he contributed himself thereunto, he might wonder to find himself in any tolerable degree of understanding."—*Clarendon.*

"Most persons proceed as if they expected to obtain wisdom as Abu Zeid al Hassan declares some Chinese thought oysters got their pearls, viz., by gaping."—*Magnon*

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b *Percy Anec.*

Solomon's judgment

a "There is no quality more highly prized in the E. than that keen discernment in the royal judge wh. detects the clue of real evidence amidst conflicting testimony, or that ready tact wh. devises a test of truth where the evidence affords no clue to any grounds of decision."—*Kitto.*

b Also *v.* 27. "The word is peculiar."—*Stanley.*

v. 22. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 280.

v. 26. *T. Pentycross*, 252.

v. 26. "If in the hearts of sinners parental love be so strong, how strong must the fatherly love of God be (Is. xlix. 15)?"—*Seiler.*

"When desperate ills demand a speedy cure, distrust is cowardice and prudence folly."—*Johnson.*

c *Greenfield.*

decided for the latter, and ordered the slave to be taken into custody, to receive the punishment due to his diabolical ingratitude.[b]

22—28. (22) **nay**, *etc.*, the false woman has nothing but strong assertion, she ventures on no explanation. Then they begin to quarrel in court. (23) The judge distinctly stating the matter in dispute. (24) **bring**, *etc.*, Sol. makes appeal to the instincts of nature.[a] (25) Such a command indicates the despotic power of an E. king. (26) **child**, better, *babe*.[b] She would even sacrifice her motherhood to save her babe's life. (27) **her**, whose true mother-feeling was thus shown. (28) **do judgment**, discerning deceptions of the wicked.

The judgment of Solomon (*v.* 25).—1. The occasion which evoked it. II. The shrewdness displayed in it. 1. There were no witnesses; 2. There was no evidence to show that even the living child belonged to either of them; 3. The king's judgment was designed to draw out the defence of love from the true mother. The one whose child it was not, was willing the king's word should take effect. The true mother would rather lose her child than see it killed. III. The impression produced by it (*v.* 28). A greater than Solomon is here.

Solomon's shrewd decision (*v.* 25).—This was apparently a very strange decision; but Solomon saw that the only way to discover the real mother was by the affection and tenderness she would necessarily show to her offspring. The plan was tried, and succeeded; and it was a proof of his sound judgment, penetration, and acquaintance with the human heart, if not of his extraordinary and supernatural wisdom. There are several similar decisions recorded by heathen writers. Suetonius, in his Life of the Emperor Claudian, whom he celebrates for his wonderful sagacity and penetration, tells us that this emperor discovered a woman to be the real mother of a young man, whom she refused to acknowledge, by commanding her to marry him, the proofs being doubtful on both sides; for, rather than commit incest, she confessed the truth. Diodorus Siculus also informs us that Ariopharnes, king of Thrace, being appointed to decide between three young men, each of whom professed to be the son of the deceased king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, discovered the real son by ordering each to shoot an arrow into the dead body of the king: two of them did this without hesitation; but the real son of the deceased monarch refused.[c]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Solomon's princes

a Comp. begin. of Dav.'s reign. 2 Sa. iv. 4, 5.

b "This list refers to a later period of Sol.'s reign; for it contains names of Sol.'s sons-in-

1—6. (1) **all Israel**,[a] signs of division bet. Is. and Judah, and some resistance to Sol. there had been. By prudence and prompt action evils were checked, and the whole country united under his sway. (2) **princes**,[b] 2 Sa. xviii. 6. **son of**, grandson, 1 Chr. vi. 10. **priest**, prob. high priest, others think prime minister. (3) **Shisha**, 1 Chr. xviii. 16. **scribes**,[c] secretaries; **recorder**,[d] remembrancer. (4) **over the host**, 1 Ki. ii. 35. **Abiathar**, comp. 1 Ki. ii. 26, 27. (5) **Nathan**, the prophet. **officers**, see *vv.* 8—19. **friend**, as 2 Sa. xv. 37, xvi. 16. (6)

household, steward of the court and harem. **tribute,**[e] levy of men, not taxes; comp. 2 Sa. xx. 24.

Solomon's dominion (*vv.* 1—28).—I. Solomon's dominion was perfect and complete. II. This perfect dominion was in fulfilment of prophecy. III. It was characterised by universal peace. IV. It was characterised by perfect safety. V. The subjects of this kingdom were numerous and happy. VI. Its affairs were managed by subordinate servants. VII. It was the duty of all the subjects to contribute to its support. VIII. All who came to Solomon's table were fed.[f]

Royalty.—

> Unbounded power and height of greatness give
> To kings that lustre which we think divine;
> The wise who know 'em. know they are but men;
> Nay, sometimes weak ones too. The crowd, indeed,
> Who kneel before the image, not the god,
> Worship the deity their hands have made.[g]

7—12. (7) **provided victuals,**[a] portions of produce were set apart for the king's use, and these were collected by the officers. (8) **Mount Ephraim,** Jos. xvi. (9) **Makaz,** not known. **Shaalbim,** Jos. xix. 42; Ju. i. 35. **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xix. 41. **Elon-beth-hanan,** poss. Beit-Hanun, near Gaza,[b] Jos. xix. 43. (10) **Aruboth,** not known. **Sochoh,** Jos. xv. 35; 1 Sa. xvii. 1—3. **Hepher,** Jos. xii. 17. (11) **Dor,** Jos. xi. 2, xvii. 11. (12) **Taanach, Megiddo,** Jos. xii. 21. **Beth-shean,** Jos. xvii. 11. **Zartanah,** as Jos. iii. 16; 1 Ki. vii. 46, prob. **Abel-meholah,** Ju. vii. 22. **Jokneam,** Jos. xii. 22.

Royal revenues (*v.* 7).—I. These were vast. To meet not only the common requirements of the court, but extraordinary royal banquets, as on occasion of visits of foreign princes—Q. Sheba, etc. II. Their collection distributed over the whole land. 1. Twelve districts; 2. Twelve collectors; 3. Twelve monthly portions. III. Attempt at equable distribution of taxation.

Taxes, and their collection (*v.* 7).—The Eastern people to this day, it seems, support the expenses of government, in common, by paying such a proportion of the produce of their lands to their princes. These are their taxes. No wonder it was so in remoter ages. Chardin gives us this account: "The revenues of princes in the East are paid in the fruits and productions of the earth. There are no other taxes upon the peasants." The twelve officers of Solomon then are to be considered as his general receivers. They furnished food for all that belonged to the king; and the having provisions for themselves and attendants seems to have been, in those times of simplicity, all the ordinary gratification his ministers of state, as well as his meaner servants, received. Silver, gold, horses, armour, precious vestments, and other things of value, came to him from other quarters: partly a kind of tribute from the surrounding princes, partly from the merchants whom he suffered to pass through his country to and from Egypt or elsewhere, partly from his own commerce by the Red Sea. The horses and armour he seems to have distributed among the most populous towns, who were to find horsemen and people to drive chariots to such a number when called for; and out of the silver and other precious things that came to him he made presents upon extraordinary occasions to those that distinguished themselves in his service. And according to this plan

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law. *vv.* 11, 15." —*Wordsworth.*

c 2 Ki. xii. 10.

d 1 Chr. xviii. 15.

e "The reference is to the forced labourers whom Sol. employed in his great works. Heb. *mas.*"—*Spk. Com.*, and *Wordsworth.*

f F. Wagstaff.

g Rowe.

collectors of the revenue

a "Not exchequer officers, who managed the crown lands, but general collectors of the royal revenue, wh., in the E., consist mostly of raw material, *i.e.* fruits and products of the land."—*Keil.*

"In ancient Persia the country was parcelled out into divisions, which had to supply the table of the king and his court during diff. portions of the year."—*Spk. Com.*

b Robinson.

"Mortal kingdoms are not lasting, and, while they last, are not uniform. They have their climacteric years, and terminate within certain periods. The kingdom of heaven shall have no end. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—*Spencer.*

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of conducting the expenses of civil government, the history of Solomon is to be explained. Commentators have not always had this present to their minds when illustrating this part of Scripture.[e]

[e] *Harmer.*

13—19. (13) **Ramoth-gilead,** Jos. xx. 8. **towns of Jair,**[a] De. iii. 14. **Mahanaim,**[b] Ge. xxxii. 2. (15) **also,** comp. *v.* 11. (16) **Hushai,** 2 Sa. xv. 32. **Aloth,**[c] not identified. (17) **Jehoshaphat,** not the recorder.[d] (18) **Shimei,** 1 Ki. i. 8. (19) **only officer,** tho' the district was so large and wide.

A merchant sovereign.—When Georgia was invaded by Aga Mohammed, the founder of the present Persian dynasty, the only one of the Khorassanian chiefs who was not obliged to give hostages of fidelity, was Isaac Khan, chief of Turbet-e-Hyderee, a man of low birth, who by the peaceable pursuits of commerce, had been able, like the Medici family in Italy, to obtain a territory of two hundred miles in length, and to raise himself from being overseer of a caravansary, to the rank of an independent sovereign. His revenue was reckoned at £200,000, of which £80,000 proceeded from his purchased land property; £80,000 from his subjects, and £40,000 from the profits of his merchandise. He had 6,000 troops in his pay, but chiefly trusted to his policy for the maintenance of his power; nor did ever prince more securely reign in the hearts of his subjects and of the merchants whom he had attracted to his new emporium. To these, as well as to pilgrims and beggars of every country and religion, his hall was always open; and it was his principal relaxation from the fatigues of government and of traffic to dine in company with this motley multitude, conversing on equal terms with all, acquiring an accurate knowledge of everything which concerned the welfare of his people, and surprising his guests with his affability and his deep and various learning.[e]

[a] Described in Porter's *Giant Cities of Bashan.*

[b] Jos. xiii. 26; 2 Sa. ii. 8, xvii. 24.

[c] *Bavloth*, or *Beaioth*, LXX., Syr., and Vulg.

[d] 2 Sa. viii. 16.

"As merchants are glad to pay all their wealth and substance for pearls of great price, hoping to be great gainers thereby; so we ought not to spare any earthly treasure, or forbear any cost, for the attainment of that most precious pearl, the kingdom of heaven."—*Cawdray.*

[e] *Percy Anec.*

extent of the kingdom

20—25. (20)[a] **as the sand,** Ge. xxii. 17. **eating,** *etc.*, the sign of prosperity developing self-indulgence. (21) **all the kingdoms,** petty nations around. **river,** Euphrates. **presents,** tribute.[b] (22) **provision,** for the entire court; indic. his state, and hospitality. **measures,** Heb. *cors;* some think 86,[c] others 44 Eng. gallons.[d] (23) **fatted fowl,** not the usual word for *poultry.* Suggestions made are, *capons, geese,* or more generally *what is choice.* (24) **this side the river,** *i.e.* west of Euphrates. **Tiphsah,**[e] ford of the Euph., *Thapsacus.* **Azzah,** Gaza.[f] (25) *See* 2 Ki. xviii. 31.

The blessings of peace (*vv.* 24, 25).—I. Wherein they consist. II. To what they oblige. Peace nourishes, disturbance consumes.

Fig tree in the vineyard (*v.* 25).—In the valley of the Rhine, where the vine is cultivated as the material of a great manufacture, and the staple of a foreign trade, fruit trees of other species are not admitted within the vineyard; but at Bolzen, in the Tyrol, where the habits of society are more simple and primitive. I have repeatedly seen fig trees growing within the lofty wall of the carefully-cultured vineyard, rewarding the possessor for his care with abundant fruit.[g]

[a] *vv.* 20, 21 appear to be out of place, and would better come in after *v.* 25.

[b] 1 Ki. x. 25.

[c] *Josephus; Wordsworth.*

[d] Rabbinical writers; *Smith's Dict.*

[e] From Heb. *pasach*, to pass over.

[f] Jos. xiii. 3; comp. De. ii. 23.

"Peace is rarely denied to the peaceful."—*Schiller.*

[g] *Dr. Arnot*

his chariots and horsemen

26—28. (26) Comp. numb. given in 2 Chr. ix. 25. **horsemen,**[a] horses for riding, cavalry horses. (27) **those officers,** as *vv.* 7—19. (28) **dromedaries,** better as marg. mules or swift beasts. **place . . were,** meaning is, "they brought the

[a] "*Parashim*, as distinguished

provender to the places where the horses and coursers were :" [b] *i.e.* the different cities where they were lodged.

Collectors of royal dues (*v.* 27).—They lacked nothing—1. Of zeal in the service; 2. Of power to collect; 3. Of the quantity they had to supply from month to month. How seldom can it be said of those who collect for the cause of our King that they lack nothing. The lack of result often indicative of the lack of zeal in the collector, or of willinghood in the people.

Solomon's commisariat.—The great number of beasts required daily in Solomon's kitchen will by no means be found incredible when we compare it with the accounts of the daily consumption of Oriental courts in modern times, and the prodigious number of servants of an Asiatic prince. Thus Tavernier, in his description of the seraglio, says that five hundred sheep and lambs were daily required for the persons belonging to the court of the sultan.[c]—*Harts and fallow-deer.*—"Harts." The original *ayil*, the name of the genus, including all the species of the deer kind, whether they are distinguished by round horns, as the stag; or by flat ones, as the fallow-deer; or by the smallness of the branches, as the roe.[d]—"Fallow-deer." The Hebrew *yachmur*, rendered *bubalus* by the Vulgate, probably denotes the *buffalo*, and though the flesh of a buffalo does not seem so well tasted as beef, being harder and more coarse, yet in our times persons of distinction, as well as the common people, and even the European merchants, eat a good deal of it in countries where that animal abounds." [e]

29—34. (29) **heart,** used of the intellect as well as of the affections.[a] **as the sand,** proverbial descrip. of extraordinary multitude and fulness.[b] (30) **east country,** Arabia, famed for their moral wisdom.[c] **Egypt,**[d] Ac. vii. 22; Is. xix. 11, xxxi. 2, 3. (31) **than all men,** of his age. **Ethan,** *etc.*, names of reputed learned men; comp. for the names 1 Chr. ii. 6, vii. 33, 44. (32) **three thousand,** many of wh. are lost. **songs,** as Cant. i. 1; Ps. lxxii., cxxvii. (33) **cedar,** Heb. *erez.* **hyssop,** Ex. xii. 22, perhaps the moss-like plant, called *orthotrichum saxatile.* (34) Comp. ch. x. 1.

The wisdom of Solomon.—I. Its origin, *v.* 29 (*see* also Pr. ii. 6; Da. ii. 21). II. Its greatness, *v.* 30 *sq.* III. Its result. *v.* 34.

The comparative beauty of trees.—"There is one glory of the oak, which looks as if it had faced a thousand storms, and, having stood them all, were ready to face as many more; another glory of the sycamore, that spreads in gentle pomp its honeyed shade; another glory of the birch, so graceful in the midst of its maiden tresses; another glory of the elm, throwing out its wide arms, as if rejoicing in its strength; and another glory of the lime, with its sheltering shade, inviting us to enter and linger. Each has its own glory, of which it would be shorn were it to make an ambitious attempt to usurp the glory of its neighbour.[e] —*The cedar.*—The Hebrew word *aroz*, whence the Chaldee and Syriac *arzo*, and the Arabic and Ethiopic *arz*, and Spanish *alerze*, unquestionably denotes the *cedar*; it is thus rendered by the Septuagint and other Greek versions *kedros*, and by the Vulgate *cedras*; and the inhabitants of mount Lebanon still call it *arz*. The cedar is a large and noble evergreen tree, and according to Tournefort makes a distinct genus of plants, but it is comprehended by Linnæus among the junipers.[f]

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from — *sustm.*" *Gesenius*; so *Keil.*
b Syk. Com.
LXX. have "to the place where the king was."
"In the East, horses are still fed with barley. Hasselquist observes that in the plain of Jericho the Arabians had sown barley for their horses. They are very careful of their straw, which they cut into small bits by an instrument which at the same time threshes out the corn; this chopped straw, with barley, beans, and balls made of bean and barley-meal, or of the pounded kernels of dates, are what they usually feed their beasts with." — *Maillet.*
c Rosenmuller.
d Dr. Shaw.
e Neibuhr.

Solomon's learning

a "1 Ki. x. 24, Job ix. 4, xii. 3, xxiv. 10; Pr. viii. 5.
b Keil.
c "We may see in the Bk. of Job the character of their *wisdom.* Like Sol.'s, it was chiefly *gnomic*, but included some knowledge of natural history.'—*Syk. Com.*
d "The Eg. wisdom was conversant in physical sciences, such as astronomy, geometry, botany."—*Wordsworth.*
e Dr. M'Cosh.
f Greenfield.

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CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Solomon's alliance Hiram, king of Tyre

1—6. (1) **Hiram,**[a] 2 Sa. v. 11. **a lover,** in friendly alliance; an admirer of. (2) **sent,** in response to Hiram's embassy of congratulation. (3) **could not,** was not permitted to, 2 Sa. vii. (4) **occurrent,**[b] or occurrence. (5) **my God,** comp. *his* God, *v.* 3. **Lord spake,** 2 Sa. vii. 13; 1 Chr. xxii. 10. (6) 2 Chr. ii. 3—10. **cedar trees,**[c] inclusive word, for suitable timber. **hire,** wages. **skill to hew,**[d] understands how to hew. **Sidonians,** prob. then under sceptre of Hiram.

Solomon's purpose to build a house to the Lord.—I. The motive (*vv.* 3—5). 1. Not ambition, love of glory, or pomp; 2. But the Divine will, and his father's charge. II. The time (*v.* 4). A time of rest and peace. III. The request for assistance (*v.* 6). In undertakings for God's glory we should trust Him who rules men's hearts.

The cedar.—The cedar grows, it is true, on the mountains of Amanus and Taurus, in Asia Minor, but it does not there attain the height and strength it acquires on Mount Lebanon, on which account the cedars of Lebanon have been renowned from the most ancient times. But the cedar woods which formerly covered a part of this mountain have long ago vanished. Only on the north-east side is a small wood, consisting of an inconsiderable number of small thick cedars, and eight or nine hundred younger ones. The oldest and largest cedars are distinguished from the younger ones chiefly by this, that the latter grow up straight, and their boughs branch out horizontally from the stem, but hang down a little; and in these two particulars, and in general in their whole form, entirely resemble our European pines and firs; whereas the old cedars have a short and very thick trunk, which divides not far from the root into three, four, or five large arms, which grow straight up, and are very thick; some of them grow together for about ten feet. "These trees," says Rauwolf, "which remain green during the whole year, have large trunks, which may be some fathoms thick, and as high as our firs; but as they have larger arms, according to which the stem bends, this takes away so much of their perpendicular height. The branches spread out pretty far in such a beautiful equality that they look as if they had been clipped above, and made even with particular care. It may easily be perceived before you get very near them, that there is a great difference between these and other resinous trees. Otherwise they nearly resemble larch trees, especially in the leaves, which are small, narrow, and shoot out as close together."

Hiram sells cedar to Solomon

7—12. (7) Comp. 2 Chr. ii. 11—16. **the Lord,** Jehovah, recognised as supreme God of Canaan. (8) **timber of fir,** Heb. *berosh; cypress,*[a] 2 Chr. ii. 8. (9) **in floats,** this materially lessened the labour of transit: floats are made by fastening together a number of trees. **receive them,** *Joppa,*[b] Jaffa, the port of reception was only some 40 m. fr. Jerus. **food,** *etc.,*[c] this was the form of payment Hiram proposed. (10, 11) **pure oil,** lit. *beaten oil:* superior quality. **year by year,** while the **work** lasted. (12) **league,** friendly alliance.

Solomon's alliance Hiram, king of Tyre

[a] *Huram,* 2 Chr. ii. 3.

[b] Lat. *occurrere,* from *ob,* and *currere,* to run.

[c] "The forests of Lebanon, adjoining the sea in Sol.'s time, belonged to the Phœnicians." —*Jamieson.*

[d] "The mechanical genius of the Phœnicians generally, and of the Sidonians in particular, is noticed by many ancient writers." —*Spk. Com.* "The fleets wh. they were obliged to build gave them ample opportunity for exercising and increasing their skill in all kinds of timber-work." —*Dr. Porter.* "Planters of trees ought to encourage themselves by considering all future time as present; indeed, such consideration would be a useful principle to all men in their conduct of life, as it respects both this world and the next."—*Bishop Watson.*

Hiram sells cedar to Solomon

[a] *Gesenius.*

[b] 2 Chr. ii. 16; Ezr. iii. 7.

[c] The Phœnician cities had very little arable

Hiram and Solomon.—I. Gratification. Hiram "rejoiced greatly." II. Consideration (*v.* 8). The demand of Solomon was no small one, and deserved consideration. III. Satisfaction (*v.* 10). Not one which Solomon asked that Hiram did not grant. IV. Recognition : "*endued* with understanding" (2 Chr. ii. 13). V. Combination. Solomon and Hiram not independent of each other. VI. Distribution (2 Chr. ii. 16). Each did the part allotted to him ; the result was success.[d]

Conveying wood.—Two methods of conveying wood in floats appear to have been practised. The first by pushing single trunks of trees into the water, and suffering them to be carried along by the stream. This was commonly adopted as it regarded firewood. The other was ranging a number of planks close to each other in regular order, binding them together, and steering them down the current. This was probably the most ancient practice. The earliest ships or boats were nothing else than rafts, or a collection of deals and planks bound together. By the Greeks they were called *Schedai*, and by the Latins, *Rates*. The ancients ventured out to sea with them on piratical expeditions, as well as to carry on commerce : and after the invention of ships, they were still retained for the transportation of soldiers, and of heavy burdens. Pliny, lib. vi. cap. 56. Strabo, lib. xvi. Scheffer, *De Militia Navali Veterum*, lib. i. cap. 3. Pitisci, *Lexicon Antiquitat. Rom.*, art. "*Rates*." Solomon entered into a contract with Hiram, king of Tyre, by which the latter was to cause cedars for the use of the temple to be cut down on the western side of Mount Lebanon, above Tripoli, and to be floated to Jaffa. At present no streams run from Lebanon to Jerusalem ; and the Jordan, the only river in Palestine that could bear floats, is at a great distance from the cedar forest. The wood, therefore, must have been brought along the coast by sea to Jaffa.[e]

13—18. (13) **levy,** as ch. iv. 6, reference here is plainly to forced labour.[a] (14) Though arranged so as not to be oppressive, this became the occasion of disaffection, 1 Ki. xii. 4. (15) **bare burdens,** mere labourers.[b] **hewers,** skilled workmen. (16) **officers,** overseers. Minds are needed as well as hands. The numbers differ in 2 Chr. ii. 18, fr. diff. principle of counting.[c] (17) **great stones,** bevelled at edges.[d] (18) **stone-squarers,** a proper name, *Gebalites*.[e]

The builders of the temple (*v.* 18). — I. Solomon's builders, Israelites. 1. Solomon did not act like Pharaoh (Ex. ii. 23) ; 2. We do not hear of murmuring in the work. These ancient builders examples to modern ones. II. Hiram's builders, heathen (Ps. xxii. 29). A prophetic anticipation of fact as set forth Ep. ii. 14, 19—22, iii. 4—6. Learn :—The temple a house of prayer for all nations. Many help in the material work of the Church, who do not share in the privileges of it. Many built the ark, only eight saved in it.

Hewers of wood, etc. (*v.* 15).—The late Rev. Dr. Morrison, of China, after having for some years laboured at Canton, earnestly requested the directors of the London Missionary Society to send him out a colleague ; their attention was directed to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Milne. A circumstance occurred on his first introduction to the friends of that society, which at once showed his devotedness to the Saviour's cause, and the humble opinion he entertained of himself. On his appearance before the committee

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land of their own.

d F. Wagstaff.

"But as barley and wine are also spoken of in 2 Chr. ii. 10, it has been thought probable that the wheat and the small quantity of fine oil mentioned here, and which are said to have been for Hiram's household, were intended for the use of his own family, while that in Ch. was merely for his own workmen, as it is there expressly stated to have been." — *Carpenter*

"A large, branching, aged oak is, perhaps, the most venerable of all inanimate objects." — *Shenstone.*

e Burder.

Solomon's workmen

a 1 Sa. viii. 16 1 Chr. xxii. 2.

b 2 Chr. ii. 17, 18

c "In the one case nationality, in the other degree of authority, is made the principle of the division"— *Spk. Com.*

d "Prob. some of these remain at the S.W. angle of the wall of the Haram area in the modern Jerus. Largest is 30 feet long by 7½ feet high."— *Robinson; Pal. Explor. Report.*

e Ps. lxxxiii. 7; Eze. xxvii. 9.

v. 18. "It would seem that Phœnician workmen were employed in Solomon's

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time. Among the most recent discoveries made at Jerusalem, under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, are huge stones bearing Phœnician characters. These had been covered for ages by successive accumulations of rubbish.

at Aberdeen, he seemed so rustic and unpromising, that a worthy member took Dr. Philip aside and expressed his doubts whether he had the necessary qualifications for a missionary; but added that he would have no objection to unite in recommending him as a servant to a mission, provided he would be willing to engage in that capacity. "At the suggestion of my worthy friend," says Dr. Philip, "I desired to speak with him alone. Having stated to him the objection which had been made, and asked him if he would consent to the proposal, he replied, without hesitation, and with the most significant and animated expression of countenance, 'Yes, sir, most certainly; I am willing to be anything, so that I am in the work. To be "a hewer of wood and a drawer of water" is too great an honour for me when the Lord's house is building.'

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—4. (1) **four hundred,** *etc.*, this date is very difficult to fix.[a] **Zif,** corresponding to May. (2) **house,** or temple. **cubits,** the measurement of the cubit differed so much[b] that we cannot fix the size of Sol.'s temple with certainty. (3) **porch,** portico, extending across the whole front. The proportions are double those of the tabernacle. (4) **windows,**[c] *etc.*, for ventilation chiefly.

Windows of narrow lights (*v.* 4).—*See* margin. I. The windows of the temple were so constructed that the little light that entered might be widely distributed. II. The light of the antitype—the Church—is within; Christ the light of life, and it shines out widely. III. The temple a centre, the Church a source of light.

Good architecture the work of good men.—Good architecture is the work of good and believing men; therefore, you say,—at least, some people say—"Good architecture must essentially have been the work of the clergy, not of the laity." No,—a thousand times No; good architecture has always been the work of the commonalty, not of the clergy. "What!" you say; "those glorious cathedrals—the pride of Europe—did their builders not form Gothic architecture?" No; they corrupted Gothic architecture. Gothic was formed in the baron's castle and the burgher's street. It was formed by the thoughts, and hands, and powers of free citizens and soldier kings. By the monk it was used as an instrument for the aid of his superstition: when that superstition became a beautiful madness, and the best hearts of Europe vainly dreamed and pined in the cloister, and vainly raged and perished in the crusade,—through that fury of perverted faith and wasted war, the Gothic rose also to its loveliest, most fantastic, and finally, most foolish dreams, and in those dreams was lost.[d]

5–10. (5) **chambers,**[a] side stories: "*a lean-to.*" (6) **narrow rests,** thinning the wall for each story left a ledge or rest for the joists, consequently the upper rooms were wider than the lower. (7) **made ready,** fitted together so that it might at once be set in place. **neither hammer,** *etc.*, see Ex. xx. 25; De. xxvii. 5. (8) **chamber,** or set of chambers. The lowest row was entered from the ground. (9) **covered,**

the building of the temple

a Keil argues the correctness of this number. See Art. *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

b "Either length of bone of forearm, distance fr. elbow to tip of middle finger, or fr. elbow to knuckles."—*Bib. Educ.* ii. 278, 279.

c "Windows with closed beams, *i.e.* fixed, whose lattices or blinds cannot be opened or closed at pleasure, as the windows of ordinary dwellings."—*Keil.*

"Others think mere slits outside, but widening inwards."—*S. & Com.*

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.; Dr. J. Lightfoot, Wks.* vol. ix.; *J. Bunyan,* iv. 1968, *Noel Alexander, Hist. Ecc* iii. 270; *Sir I. Newton, Op.* v. 236, *Dr. W. Brown, Antiq.* i. 36.

d Ruskin.

description of the temple

a "Appearance of narrowness in the exterior view was obviated by the stories of chambers for the

etc., roofed it. It is not likely that the roofing was flat; more probably tent-shaped. (10) As *vv.* 5, 6: **high,** *i.e.* each story.

Quiet and order in the temple (*v.* 7).—The most noticeable feature in this narrative is that the stones for the temple were all prepared before they were brought to the spot. This fact might be expressive of—I. The character of the worship which would be acceptable to God in the temple. Worship—1. Prepared for; 2. Quietly conducted; 3. Conducted in an orderly manner; 4. Appropriately conducted. II. The character of the spiritual temple, of which the material temple was typical. 1. There must be a change in those who are made stones in the living temple; 2. Religion has to do with the externals of man's life; 3. The work of preparation must be done outside the church; 4. All stones in the temple were serviceable.[b]

Ancient building (*v.* 7).—This passage is illustrated by what D'Arvieux remarks of Alexandria in Egypt. "The city gates, which are still standing, have a magnificent appearance, and are so high and broad, that we may infer from them the ancient greatness and splendour of the place. They properly consist only of four square stones; one of which serves as the threshold, two are raised on the sides, and the fourth laid across and resting upon them. I need not say that they are of great antiquity; for it is well known that for many centuries past such immense stones have not been used in building. It is a matter of surprise how the ancients could raise such heavy masses from the stone quarries, remove them, and set them up. Some are of opinion that these stones were *cast*, and probably only consisted of a heap of small stones, which were united by the finest cement; that at the place where they were wanted, wooden models or moulds were made, in which the cement and stones were mixed together, and when this mass became dry and sufficiently firm, the mould was taken off by degrees, and the stones then polished."[c]

11—14. (11) **came,** thro' a prophet; or poss. as before, in a dream or vision. (12) **if,** reminding Sol. that all Div. promises depend on conditions. (13) **dwell,**[a] *etc.*, so keeping up the national prosperity. (14) **finished it,** as is immediately narrated.

The royal builder (*v.* 14).—I. "So:" resolving to secure the blessing by fulfilling the conditions. II. "So:" to secure for his people the best protection—the presence of God. III. "So:" what he began he persevered in to the end. Learn:—Good works should be undertaken with purity of intention and steady perseverance.

The silent building of the temple (*v.* 7).—When Bishop Heber read his beautiful poem, "Palestine," in manuscript to Sir Walter Scott, his friend remarked that in speaking of the temple of Solomon he had forgotten to refer to the silence which prevailed during its erection. The poet immediately retired for a few minutes, and introduced the following beautiful lines:—

"No workmen's steel, no ponderous axes rung:
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."

This very remarkable circumstance has been frequently noticed. It is regarded as an indication of the deep sense which Solomon had of the sacredness of the work; and it has given rise to many pious and useful meditations.

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use of the priests built against the sides."—*Kitto.*

v. 7. *C. Bradley,* iii. 30; *C. Simeon,* iii. 329.

b F. Wagstaff.

"As the king, when he enters a town, finds the streets through which he is to pass cleaned, and his palace adorned, so much more ought we, whom God hath chosen for His temple, to purify ourselves from all uncleanness, and to adorn the place of His habitation with all virtue and loveliness."—*Cawdray.*

"We were charm'd, not awe-struck; for the beautiful was there triumphant."—*Talfourd.*

c Rosenmuller.

God's promise to Solomon

a Ex. xxv. 8; Eze. xxxvii. 26—28.

v. 11—13. *Bp. Ravenscroft,* i. 197. "When he spake all things into being, the everlasting silence remained unbroken. No stir was seen, no commotion felt. The starting into life of ten thousand times ten thousand millions of angels from the deep abyss of eternity created no noise. The creation of millions upon millions of worlds by the flat of His matchless power was done in noiselessness and peace."—*Dr. F. W. Faber.*

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size and carvings of the temple

a "So that the oracle was a cube of 20 cubits. This cubical form is noted, even in heathen philosophy, as the form of moral perfection." —*Wordsworth.*

b "Sculpture, in relief, of bitter-gourds and opened buds."—*Keil.*
"'Tis the eternal law, that first in beauty should be first in might."—*Keats.*
"Art, however innocent, looks like deceiving."—*Aaron Hill.*
c *Roberts.*

the oracle

a Ex. xxx. 6, xl. 5, 26.

b *Keil.*

c "The lavish use of the precious metals in ornamentation was a peculiar feature of early Oriental architecture." —*Spk. Com.*
A vain man's motto is, "Win gold and wear it;" a generous, "Win gold and share it;" a miser's, "Win gold and spare it;" a profligate's, "Win gold and spend it;" a broker's, "Win gold and lend it;" a gambler's, "Win gold and lose it;" a wise man's, "Win gold and use it."
d *Timbs.*

the cherubims

a "As standing on the highest step of created life, and uniting

15—18. (15) **within,** now describes the internal fittings. **both,** as marg. *from the floor,* etc. **fir,** juniper. (16) **built,** *etc.*, meaning he measured 20 cubits,[a] and there put up a partition, so constructing the holy of holies. (17) **forty,** so twice the length of the oracle. (18) **knops,** as marg. *gourds.* **open flowers,** better *opening flower-buds.*[b] **no stone seen,** so the temporary, tent-like character of the building was partly preserved.

Knops and flowers (*v.* 18).—I. Explain the terms. The knop—a gourd, fruit full of seed. Flower, promise of fruit, beautiful, fragrant. II. Apply the symbol. The house of God should be beauty of holiness, fragrance of praise, and practical fruitfulness.

Carved work (*v.* 18).—The people of the East are exceedingly profuse in their carved work. See a temple; it is almost from its foundation to its summit a complete mass of sculpture and carved work. Look at their sacred car in which their gods are drawn out in procession, and you are astonished at the labour, taste, and execution displayed by the workmen in carved work; nay, the roof and doors of private dwellings are all indebted to the chisel of the "cunning workman." The pillars that support the verandahs, their chests, their couches (as were those of Solomon), the handles of different instruments, their ploughs, their vessels (however rude in other respects), must be adorned by the skill of the carver.[c]

19—22. (19) **ark,** *etc.*, chief object in holy of holies. (20) **forepart,** inner part, farthest from porch. **pure gold,** wh. was beaten into thin plates. **altar,** of incense.[a] (21) **house,** here the oracle part of it. **chains,** *etc.*, ornamental work, like chains, running over the partition wall.[b] (22) **whole house,** or the rest of the building. **overlaid,** *etc.*,[c] so that nothing may meet the eye but pure gold.

Gold and cedar.—I. The best of the good employed in the service of God. II. The best employed with no niggard hand. III. The best so distributed as to ensure beauty and strength.

The gold in the world.—Estimate the yard of gold at £2,000,000, which it is in round numbers. And all the gold in the world might, if melted into ingots, be contained in a cellar twenty-four feet square and sixteen feet high. All the boasted wealth already obtained from California and Australia would go into an iron safe nine feet square and nine feet high. So small is the cube of yellow metal that has set populations on the march, that roused the whole world to wonder. The contributions of the people in the time of David for the sanctuary exceeded £6,800,000. The immense treasure David is said to have collected for the sanctuary amounted to £889,000,000 sterling (Crito says £798,000,000)—a sum greater than the British National Debt. The gold with which Solomon overlaid the "most holy place"—only a room thirty feet square—amounted to more than £38,000,000 sterling.[d]

23—30. (23) **cherubim,**[a] Ex. xxxvii. 6—9, appropriate symbols of the glory of the Lord. **olive,** the tree of peace.[b] (24) **uttermost part,** the point. (25, 26) As symbols, their unity in size was an important feature. (27) **inner house,** the holy of holies. They formed a sort of screen across the

chamber. (28) **overlaid**, *etc.*, the figures being made of wood. In tabernacle the cherubim were of gold. (29) Comp. *v.* 18.[c] (30) **floor**, applying to this inner holy chamber.

The cherubims.—I. To associate earthly with heavenly worship. II. Made of olive-wood—symbol of fruitful worship. III. With extended wings, to teach alacrity in service. IV. Their equal size and appearance, to suggest harmony and union in the service of God. V. The walls suggest salvation. The worship and worshipper under the protection of heaven.

Ministering angels (*v.* 23).—

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skyes like flying pursuivant,
Against fowle fiendes to ayd us militant!
They for us fight, they watch, and dewly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward;
O why should heavenly God to men have such regard![d]

31—38. (31) **doors**, in the partition, *v.* 16. **fifth part**, "lintel was one-fifth of the width of the wall, and each door-post one-fifth of its height. Thus the opening was a square of four cubits, of six feet."[a] (32) As *vv.* 18, 29. Prob. the gold plates were hammered to fit the carved wood-work. (33) **door of temple**, from the porch into the entire building. **fourth part**, *i.e.* five cubits high. (34) **folding**, like shutters, so the whole width did not need to be opened. (35) **fitted**, hammered, or pressed. (36) **inner court**, of the priests; 2 Chr. iv. 9. **three rows**, *etc.*, either as a fence, or as a floor.[b] (38) **Bul**, our November. **seven years**, exactly 7 years and 6 months.

The doors of the temple.—I. They were suggestive of the feelings and purposes with which the house should be entered. II. They indicated what might be found in that house—olive, joy; palm, fruitfulness, and growth; flowers, beauty of character; gold, material prosperity; cherubims, holiness. III. Who would not be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord?

Temple stones.—We then passed up to the south-east corner of the city wall, to examine the immense stones which are here built into it. As it is at this part alone that these large stones occur, and as here the temple stood, we infer that these are the temple stones. Not, indeed, in their original places, for not one stone has been left upon another, but still the very stones to which the disciples in their admiration pointed. Some were eighteen feet long by four broad, others longer and broader; but we had not the means of measuring them exactly. A little farther on are four or five stones, in a line, on the lowest course, which look very like as if they were really in their old position. Not far from this is the half-arch of a gateway, finely carved, which is generally believed to be one of the original arches of the temple. It is the entrance to one of the subterraneous passages, which seem to be as old as the days of Solomon. The whole of this angle of the wall is full of interest. You cannot look at any part of it without repeating the exclamation of the disciples: "See what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"

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in themselves the most perfect created life, are the most perfect revelation of God and the Divine life."—*Bähr*, thro' *Keil.*

b Ge. viii. 11.

c "Symbols of growth, bloom, and potent life in the kingdom of God."—*Keil.*

vv. 28, 29. *Dr. R. Welton*, 60.

d Spenser.

the finishing of the temple

a Spk. Com.

Lightfoot renders, "The post wh. was at the door cheeks was at the fifth cubit," so that the entrance would be 10 cubits."—*Wordsworth.*

b Michaelis.

"The clearest window that ever was fashioned, if it is barred by spiders' webs, and hung over with carcases of insects, so that the sunlight has forgotten to find its way through, of what use can it be? Now, the Church is God's window; and if it is so obscured by errors that its light is darkness, how great is that darkness!"—*H. W. Beecher.*

c Bonar.

"An artist has more than two eyes."—*Halliburton.*

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CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Solomon's palace

1—6. (1) **own house,** palace; begun after completing the temple. Longer time was taken bec. such preparations had not been made for it. Also the buildings were more various and extensive. (2) **house . . Lebanon,**[a] prob. the fanciful name of the state apartments. **four rows,** prob. should be 3.[b] (3) **covered,** *etc.*, so really a cedar house. (4) **windows,** ch. vi. 4. **light,** *etc.*, "the windows were directly opposite one another, giving what we call a *through* light." (5) **square,** not arched at the top. (6) **porch,** favourite feature of Persian architecture.

The king's palace.—I. How royal its proportions, material, cost. II. The porch, or entrance, large, beautiful, and strong. III. Compare with the Palace of the Great King. For whom prepared—many mansions, or rooms. The porch by which the palace is entered—the Church of Christ. Are we in the porch waiting to be summoned into the palace?

Courts.—

> Courts are the places where best manners flourish,
> Where the deserving ought to rise, and fools
> Make show. Why should I vex and chafe my spleen,
> To see a gaudy coxcomb shine, when I
> Have sense enough to soothe him in his follies,
> And ride him to advantage as I please?[c]

the porch and the queen's palace

7—12. (7) **porch of judgment,** keeping up custom of judging *in the gate.* (8) **dweit,** the place already described was devoted to state purposes. **Pharaoh's daughter,** ch. iii. 1. **like unto,** of similar workmanship. (9) **within and without,** *i.e.* squared, not merely faced. (10) **great stones,** ch. v. 17. (11) **above,** ref. to the roofing. (12) Comp. ch. vi. 36.

The bride's house (*v.* 8).—I. Solomon's bride was the daughter of a stranger. Compare Christ and His bride, the Church. II. Solomon prepared for his bride a house like the porch of his palace. Compare the ordinances, etc., of the Church of Christ.

Great stones (*v.* 10).—In the ruins of Balbec stones of great magnitude are found. "But what is still more astonishing is the enormous stones which compose the sloping wall. To the west the second layer is formed of stones which are from twenty-eight to thirty-five feet long, by about nine in height. Over this layer, at the north-west angle, there are three stones, which alone occupy a space of one hundred and seventy-five feet and a half: viz. the first, fifty-eight feet seven inches; the second, fifty-eight feet eleven; and the third, exactly fifty-eight feet; and each of these are twelve feet thick. These stones are of a white granite, with large shining flakes, like gypse. There is a quarry of this kind of stone under the whole city, and in the adjoining mountains, which is open in several places; and, among others, on the right, as we approach the city, there is still lying there a stone, hewn on three sides, which is sixty-nine feet two inches long, twelve feet ten inches broad, and thirteen feet three in thickness."[a]

Hiram, the Tyrian

13—18. (13) **Hiram,** comp. 2 Chr. ii. 7.[a] (14) **wrought all his work,** *i.e.* metal-work. (15) **brass,** prob. copper. (16)

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a *Smith's Bib. Dict.* ii. 658.

So called poss. from the rows of cedar pillars, etc., *vv.* 2, 3.

b As LXX.

"Rich windows that exclude the light, and passages that lead to nothing."—*Gray.*

"Unhappy lot of all that shine in courts; for forced compliance, or for zealous virtue, still odious to the monarch, or the people."—*Johnson.*

c *Otway.*

"The sentiment of justice is so natural, so universally acquired by all mankind, that it seems to me independent of all law, all party, all religion."—*Voltaire.*

"Justice is the bread of the nation; it is always hungry for it."—*Chateaubriand.*

"The sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living, which are to be desired when dying."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"I think sculpture and painting have an effect to teach us manners, and abolish hurry."—*Emerson.*

a *Volney.*

chapiters, or capitals. (17) Trans. "nets chequerwise and festoons chainwise."[b] (18) **pomegranates,** one of the commonest ornaments in Assyria.

The widow's clever son.—I. This widow of Naphtali left with a son, who had been trained in his father's workshop. II. This son followed his father's trade, became skilled, famous, sought for by a great king to execute his works. III. Joy of the widow as she saw the eminence of her son. Learn—1. Industry; 2. Perseverance; 3. Filial regard; 4. The special mention of the mother is suggestive.

Solomon's porch (*v.* 7).—It deserves remark, that the Eastern floors and ceilings are just the reverse of ours. Their ceilings are of wood, ours of plaster or stucco-work; their floors are of plaster or of painted tiles, ours of wood. This effectually detects a mistake of Kimchi and R. Solomon, who, according to Buxtorf, supposed the floor of the porch of judgment which Solomon built was all of cedar; whereas the sacred writer (1 Kings vii. 7) undoubtedly meant its covering a-top, its ceiling, was of cedar. Indeed here in the West, where these Jewish Rabbis lived, such places are usually built after the Eastern mode, which makes their mistake so much the more strange. Westminster Hall is, I think, paved with stone and ceiled with wood; and such without doubt was the ceiling and the pavement of the porch for judgment which Solomon built, and which was erected in a much hotter climate.[c]

19—22. (19) **lily work,** imitation of the stalks, leaves, and blossoms.[a] **in the porch,** either inside the porch, toward the porch;[b] or *as* in the porch.[c] **four cubits,** this was the width of the lily work. (20) **belly,** a portion of the cornice arched, or bent out. **two hundred,**[d] *see v.* 42. This the number on each pillar. (21) **pillars,** *v.* 15.[e] **in the porch,** or *at* the porch, entrance of the vestibule. **Jachin,** marg. *He will establish.* **Boaz,** strength, or in strength. So the two together make a sentence.[f] (22) **lily work,** *v.* 19.

Lily work (*v.* 22).—Consider—I. That there is an acceptableness in a good and true work in itself, but much more by relation, that is, when it is rendered as to God. We must come to do our best because we are doing it for our Lord. II. The soundness and honesty of service in God's spiritual temple. III. As upon the top of Hiram's pillars was "lily work," so Majesty crowned with gracefulness will be found in all the Divinest thoughts. 1. The pillars must be before the florid ornamentation; 2. But beauty is also in God's sanctuary, and "upon the top of the pillars was lily work."[g]

The old church.—

How like an image of repose it looks,
That ancient, holy, and sequester'd pile!
Silence abides in each tree-shaded aisle,
And on the grey spire caw the hermit rooks;
So absent is the stamp of modern days,
That, in the quaint carved oak, and oriel stain'd
With saintly legend, to Reflection's gaze
The Star of Eld seems not yet to have waned.
At pensive eventide, when streams the west
On moss-green pediment and tombstone grey,

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brass-founder

a See Ex. xxxi. 6.

b "Prob a fine network over the whole, and chainwork hanging in festoons outside." — *Spk. Com.*

"The whole world without art and dress would be but one great wilderness."—*Butler.*

"A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators, and effect the noblest designs by easy methods."—*Burke.*

c Harmer.

Jachin and Boaz

a Keil.

"There is a cornice of (so-called) lily work at Persepolis, consisting of 3 ranges of broadish rounded leaves, one over the other."—*Smith's Bib. Dic.*

b LXX., *Wordsworth.*

c Keil.

d Comp. 2 Chr. iii. 16, iv. 13; Jer. lii. 23.

e Jer. lii. 17; Ga. ii. 9; Re. iii. 12.

f LXX. trans. *katorthosis,* direction; *ischous,* strength.

vv. 21, 22. *S. Mather, M.A., Figures and Types,* 359.

g G. J. Proctor. The power, whether of painter or poet, to describe rightly what he calls an ideal thing, depends upon its being to him not an ideal but a

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real thing. No man ever did or ever will work well, but either from actual sight, or sight of faith.
h Moir.

And spectral Silence pointeth to Decay,
How preacheth Wisdom to the conscious breast,
Saying, "Each foot that roameth here shall rest;"
To God and Heaven, Death is the only way.[h]

23—26. (23) **molten sea,** in place of the *laver.*[a] **ten cubits,** fifteen feet in diameter. **height five cubits,** seven and a half feet.[b] The dimensions are given on the mode of measurement by the radius, as was then customary; a circle was reckoned at six times its radius. (24) **knops,** *lit.* gourds, a ball-ornament, resembling fruit, in two rows.[c] **ten in a cubit,** so three hundred in the circle. (25) **oxen,** prob. life size: fixed in sets of three, to each point of the compass. Rabbins assume they were fixed on under plate of brass.[d] (26) **flowers of lilies,** or in shape of the lily flower: edge turned as a cup.

The molten sea.—Thoughts suggested by—I. Its use. Purification of priests: they especially needed purity. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord: they as men and priests liable to contract guilt. II. Its size, suggestive of abundant cleansing. III. Its construction. 1. Material durable and precious; 2. The oxen, peculiar sacrifice of priests: emblem of strength and patience: looking all ways—the blessings a holy priesthood would procure should be universally diffused.

Holy places.—It is a wise, a salutary, and a laudable provision of the Church's discipline, that she sets apart, and consecrates, by solemn religious rites, to God's glory the places which she intends for His worship; and by outward signs of decency and reverence, of majesty and holiness, impresses them with an appropriate character, which, whilst it redounds to the honour of God, operates also with no mean or trivial influence on the minds of His people. Connected with this character, and in some degree generated by it, together with an awful veneration for the great Proprietor, a certain secret sense of serene and holy pleasure is diffused over the pious and meditative mind, as soon as the feet cross the threshold which separates the house of God from common places. We feel with delight that we are on "holy ground;" and a still small voice within, as we draw near to "worship God in the beauty of holiness," answers in the words of the Apostle at the sight of the "excellent glory," "It is good for us to be here."[e]

27—31. (27) **ten bases,** for the lavers, *v.* 38, comp. ii. Chr. iv. 6, square stands, with ornamental edges. **four,** *etc.*, i.e. 6 feet each side, and 4½ feet high. (28) **borders,** ledges, mould ings, or rims at top and bottom, leaving a panel for decoration: the panel had, on its upper part, figures of animals, and on its lower, festoons of leaf and flower. (29) **base above,** or stand to keep firm the laver. **thin work,** pensile work, festoons. (30) **plates,** axletrees.[a] **undersetters,** lit. *shoulders.*[b] (31) **mouth,** prob. an arching at the top of the base.

Symbolic art.—It is an incarnation of fancy, and is a sort of petrified poetry, or concrete rhetoric. It is the blossom of the Art-tree, whose root is Thought, and whose trunk is Imagination. It is inventive, imitational, and composite. Gothic is imitational, Greek inventional, and Byzantine composite. Egyptian ornament is thoughtful, and always allegorical. The Assyrian is still quainter, simpler, and more primitive. The Greek revels in

the molten sea

a Ex. xxx. 18—21.
b "It is now generally supposed that the bowl bulged considerably below the brim, and further that it had a foot, or basin, wh. received the water as it was drawn out by taps fr. the bowl."—*Spk. Com.*
See engraving of it, *Smith's Bib. Dict.*
Comp. 2 Ki. xxv. 13; 2 Chr. iv. 2.
c 1 Ki. vi. 18.
d Keil.
e v. 23. *L. C. Sturm, Ugolinus,* 19.
"The wrought oaken beams, pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof, of those dusk places in times far aloof cathedrals call'd." —*Keats.*
f Bp. Mant.

the brazen bases

a Gesenius
b "Four strong cast brackets or bars, wh. proceeding fr. the four upper corners of the bases, stretched upwards to the outer rim of the laver, wh. thus rested partly upon them." —*Keil.*
For decorations comp. Eze. i. 10, x. 14, xli. 19; Re iv. 6, 7.
No heathen pa-

noble sweeping curves and in fretted foliage, highly conventionalised. The Oriental types in their art lost their symbolic character, and became enriched and idealised by fancy; harmony and a sweet grace are in every line. The Etruscan is rude and Asiatic, with Greek luxuriance. The Roman is strong and vigorous, leafy, luxurious, and voluptuous. The Byzantine is barbarian, rich, knotted, linked, and studded like embroidery. The Moorish is the poetry of geometry, and the mathematics of colour, varied and changeful as Nature. The Gothic is Nature subdued, and limited by rules and space. The Indian is varied, strange in its blendings and studied intermixtures, arrauged by the instinct of men of a hot climate; but the Persian is the most graceful and poetical of all Oriental work; gorgeous and yet delicate in colour, it is full of the broadest effects of contrasting hues, and wreathed and blossomed with threads of flowers, bright as those of a missal. In the harmonies of dyes there are invention and imagination. Let our students follow Nature boldly and lovingly, but not servilely,—learning to compose as she does,—not following her laws without laying down his own. Above all, let him remember that ornamentation is to art what words are to thought, and that if design and architecture are dead, no ornamentation, however beautiful, can give them life. It will be at the best but a wreath of flowers round the pale brow of the corpse.

O powers
Illimitable!—'tis but the outer hem
Of God's great mantle our poor stars do gem.[c]

32—37. (32) **borders,** panels. **wheels,** like chariot-wheels,[a] and small; only two feet six inches diameter. (33) **naves,** piece of timber in centre of a wheel, in wh. the spokes are inserted.[b] (34) **undersetters,** *see v.* 30. **of the very base,** cast with it. (35) **round compass,** circular elevation. (36) **ledges,** lit. *hands,* reaching out fr. the undersetters. **borders,** panels. **proportion,** same kind of ornament, but neces. of smaller size.[c] **additions,** as *v.* 29, festoon work. (37) **one casting,** we should say one mould.

Order and harmony (*vv.* 36, 37).—I. In the construction of the various utensils, etc., of the temple, we find that each was made in relation to each other one. Taste, order, harmony were considered, and carried out down to the minutest detail. II. The whole is suggestive of the order and harmony that should prevail in the worship of God.

A far-seeing builder.—When Sir Christopher Wren built the church of St. Magnus, there were houses on each side of London Bridge, which projected as far as the church. When these houses were pulled down, the footpath came directly against the church, so that the people who walked on that side, were obliged to go round into the coach-road. This was found very inconvenient, and a meeting of the inhabitants was held to consider if they could with safety cut a road through, which was thought too hazardous an expedient; and the neighbours apprehending it might bring the church about their ears, abandoned the scheme. A second meeting was afterwards held, when it was determined by a small majority to make the experiment. The workmen, on breaking through the wall, found a complete and perfect arch, which Sir Christopher, foreseeing with prophetic taste that the

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rallel to these bases and lavers: the whole arrangement, so full of meaning, appears quite peculiar to the Israelitish temple, for nothing of the kind is found anywhere else, either on Egyptian or Assyrian monuments (*Thenius*).

"They are valuable in their own place, and for their own purposes; frames, as they are, to set the picture in; caskets for truth's jewels; dead poles, no doubt, yet useful to support living plants, and very beautiful when the bare stem is festooned with green leaves, and crowned with a head of flowers."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

c Ruskin.

a "The height of the earliest Assyrian chariot wheels was under 3 feet."—*Spk. Com.*

b A.S. *nafu,* Skr. *nábhi,* nave and navel. Ezc. i. 15—21, iii. 13, x. 10—13.

c Eze. xli. 18, 25, 26.

"Those who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, should remember that nothing can atone for the want of prudence; that negligence and irregularity long continued will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible."—*Johnson.*

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houses would at some future period be pulled down, had left in its present form.[d]

d Percy Anec.

the brazen lavers

38—45. (38) **forty baths,** about 340 gallons. **four cubits,** in height.[a] (39) **the sea,** molten sea of *v.* 23. (40) **lavers,** not those already described, but *pots*, for carrying away the ashes.[b] (41) **pillars,** *etc.*, *vv.* 15—39. (42) **four hundred,** *the* 400 as *v.* 20. (43) **bases,** as *v.* 27. (44) **one sea,** *vv.* 23, 25. (45) **bright brass,** scoured or polished.

An ancient contractor (*v.* 40).—I. The contract made with Hiram was on the ground of his competency as a worker in metals, not on the ground of his religion. Men are sometimes chosen for building purposes who have little faculty for business, simply because of their reputation for piety. II. He finished the work he undertook to do. No breach of contract. He was fully trusted by the king (*v.* 47). III. A model business transaction.

The study of art.—The study of art possesses this great and peculiar charm, that it is absolutely unconnected with the struggles and contests of ordinary life. By private interests, by political questions, men are deeply divided and set at variance; but beyond and above all such party strifes, they are attracted and united by a taste for the beautiful in art. It is a taste at once engrossing and unselfish, which may be indulged without effort, and yet has the power of exciting the deepest emotions; a taste able to exercise and to gratify both the nobler and softer parts of our nature—the imagination and the judgment, love of emotion and power of reflection, the enthusiasm and the critical faculty, the senses and the reason.[c]

a "The entire height of the lavers and stands has been estimated at 13-ft. 9-in."—*Spk. Com.*

b Ex. xxvii. 3; 2 Ki. xxv. 14; 2 Chr. iv. 11; *Wordsworth, Keil.* "The pots were the cauldrons in which it was usual to boil the peace-offerings (1 Sa. ii. 13, 14)."—*Spk. Com.*

"Every earnest glance we give to the realities around us, with intent to learn, proceeds from a holy impulse, and is a song of praise."—*Maria McIntosh.*

c Guizot.

finishing of the temple

46—51. (46) **clay ground,** or marl;[a] wh. would bind so as to be suitable for a mould. **Succoth,**[b] East of Jordan, Ge. xxxiii. 17, prob. *Sukkot*, near Bethshan. **Zarthan,** near, but west of the river; comp. 2 Chr. iv. 17. (47) **weight . . out,** too many to take trouble of weighing: much of this brass was taken fr. cities of Hadadezer.[c] (48) **vessels,** furniture, and utensils. **of gold,** the altar was made of stone, then covered with cedar-wood, then plated with gold. **table of gold,** comp. 2 Chr. iv. 8, 19. (49) **flowers,**[d] ornamentation of candlek. **tongs,**[e] for trimming the lamps. (50) **bowls,**[f] for containing oil for lamps. **snuffers,** scissors. **spoons,** prob. for bringing incense to the altar.[g] **censers,** snuff-dishes.[h] **hinges,** hollows, sockets in wh. pins of doors moved. (51) **ended,** Ex. xl. 33.

The treasures of the house of the Lord (*v.* 51).—I. Its greatest treasure was the present Jehovah. This was God's contribution, without it the rest in vain. II. Material treasures: among them David's offering, brought in by his son. III. Other treasures and ours. Spiritual worship,—assembly of saints, consecrated hearts and lives of penitent and believing men.

Dependence upon art for comfort.—In no circumstance whatever can man be comfortable without art. The butterfly is independent of art, though it is only in sunshine that it can be happy. The beasts of the field can roam about by day, and couch by night on the cold earth, without danger to health, or sense of misfortune. But man is miserable and speedily lost so soon as he removes from the precincts of human art, without his shoes, without his clothes, without his dog and his gun, without an inn or a cottage to shelter him by night. Nature is worse to

a Burkhardt.

b Jos. xiii. 27; Ju viii. 5—8, 14—16; 2 Chr. iv. 17; Ps. lx. 6, cviii. 7.

c 1 Chr. xviii. 8.

d Ex. xxv. 31, xxxvii. 17, xxxix. 37, xl. 24, 25.

e Snuffers; Gesenius. Ex. xxv. 38, xxvii. 21.

f Ex. xii. 22.

g Wordsworth.

h Ex. xxv. 38, xxvii. 23; Nu. iv. 9.

"Those whom we call the ancients were in truth novices in all things, and properly constituted the infancy of mankind; and, as we have added to their knowledge in the experience of succeeding ages, it is in ourselves

him than a stepmother—he cannot love her; she is a desolate and a howling wilderness. He is not a child of nature like a hare. She does not provide him a banquet and a bed upon every little knoll, every green spot of earth. She persecutes him to death, if he do not return to that sphere of art to which he belongs, and out of which she will show him no mercy, but be unto him a demon of despair and a hopeless perdition.[i]

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that we should recognise that antiquity which we revere in others."—*Prescot.*

[i] *Ruskin.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

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1—5. (1) **elders,** *etc.*, Sol. gathered all the representatives of the nation, in order that his act might be regarded as a national one.[a] (2) **all the men,** as spectators, not official actors. **feast . . Ethanim,**[b] feast of tabernacles, or ingathering, Le. xxiii. 33—44. (3) **the priests,** *etc.*, they bore the ark itself, and the Levites the furniture, etc., of the tabernacle.[c] (4) **the tabernacle,** most prob. the orig. one from Gibeon, wh., with the old furniture and utensils, was preserved as a relic.[d] (5) **not be told,** or counted.[e]

The dedication of the temple.—I. The bringing of the ark of the covenant to the holy of holies (*vv.* 1—13). II. The speech, prayer, and benediction of the king (*vv.* 14—61). III. Great sacrificial solemnity of the whole people (*vv.* 62—66).[f]

Inviting others to worship.—We read in Cassell's *Natural History* that a gentleman laid a piece of sweetmeat on the table, and then picked up an ant and placed it on the sweetmeat. He was astonished to see the little creature rapidly descend by one of the legs of the table and seek his fellows. They appear to have understood the news. He then at once turned back, followed by a long train of his fellow-citizens, and conducted them to the prize. Are there not many who know the sweetness of the Gospel who might learn a lesson from this ant? Could they not induce their fellow-citizens to follow them to the house of God, where the Gospel sweetness is dispensed?

the ark brought in

[a] Comp. Dav.'s bringing of ark fr. house of Obed-Edom, 2 Sa. vi.; 1 Chr. xv.

[b] "Fr. the new moon of October to the new moon of November."—*Robinson.*

[c] Nu. iii. 29—32, iv. 5—16.

[d] *Keil.*

[e] Comp. 2 Sa. vi. 13; 1 Chr. xv. 26; Heb. x. 14.

[f] *Lange.* Zinzendorf owed much of his religious fervour to the casual sight of a picture of the Crucifixion, with this simple inscription at the bottom: "All this for thee: how much for Me?"

6—11. (6) **oracle,**[a] the portion called in the tabernacle the *holy of holies.* **cherubim,** 1 Ki. vi. 23—27. (7) **and the staves,**[b] wh. projected fr. the ark so as to rest on priest's shoulders. (8) **drew out,** intimating that the ark had now reached its final rest.[c] **not seen without,** did not project into the outer chamber. (9) **nothing,** *etc.*,[d] comp. Heb. ix. 4. It is suggested that as there was now more room, Sol. may have put the pot of manna and rod on a table by the side.[e] (10) **cloud,** visible symbol of Div. presence, Ex. xxix. 43, xl. 34. (11) **glory,** a special brilliancy, on wh. mortal eyes could not gaze.

The solemn procession to the new temple.—I. Its aim and signification. Ark of cov. containing the Law. We have in new cov. both Law and Gosp. Where the Word is, there the Lord dwells. II. Its elements. King, priests, people, gathered round the ark.

Going to church.—

Some go to church just for a walk,
Some go there to laugh and talk;
Some go there the time to spend,
Some go there to meet a friend;

the glory filled the house

[a] 1 Ki. vi. 19—22.

[b] The wings of the cherubim spread fr. wall to wall, 1 Ki. vi. 27.

[c] "On a rough, unhewn projection of the rock, under covering of the golden cherubs, the ark was thrust in, and placed lengthways, on what is called 'the place of its rest.'"—*Stanley.*

[d] Ex. xl. 20; De. x. 2, 5.

[e] *Spk. Com.* v. 9. *Crit. Sac. Thes. Nov.* i. 486.

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For the staves, see Ex. xxv. 13, 15.

vv. 10, 11. *Abp. Whately*, 65.

f J. T. Watson.

Some go to learn the parson's name,
Some go there to wound his fame;
Some go there for speculation,
Some go there for observation;
Some go there to doze and nod,
But few go there to worship God.*f*

the address of Solomon

12—16. (12) **Lord said,** promised.*a* **thick darkness,** the holy of holies was entirely dark,*b* no natural or artificial light was provided. (13) **a settled place,***c* this was the great idea of the temple, it was the permanent centre of the worship of Jehovah. (14) **turned his face,** he had been speaking towards the holy of holies. **stood,** attitude of respect and attention. (15) **spake,** comp. 2. Sa. vii. (16) **no city,** for a permanent dwelling place. 2 Sa. vii. 6.

The glory of God filled the temple.—I. What this means. Manifestation of God (1 Ti. vi. 16; 1 Co. xiii. 12). II. The mode of this manifestation. A cloud. "The heaven-descended sign of the presence of the self-manifesting God."

Loss by neglecting means of grace.—My Æolian harp is not sounding, and yet a fine fresh wind is blowing in at the window. Why hear I not its soft mystic strains? I remember, it was put away in the lumber room and some of its strings are broken. There is a gracious revival in the church, and believers are greatly refreshed by the visitations of God's Spirit, but I am in a sadly worldly unbelieving condition. May it not be because I neglect private prayer, and have not been regular at the prayer-meeting; my family concerns and business cares have kept my heart in the lumber room, and my soul has lost her first love? Yes, these are the reasons. Lord, tune my heart, and I will again seek the places where the heavenly wind of Thy Spirit blows graciously and refreshingly. How can I bear to be silent when thy daily mercies are all around me singing of Thy love?*d*

Comp. Ps. xviii. 11, xcvii 2; Is. xlv. 15; He. xii. 18.

c Ps. cxxxii. 14.

v. 13. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 361.

vv. 13–27. *Dr. W. Smith*, 167.

d C. H. Spurgeon

17—21. (17) **in the heart, as a** cherished purpose. (18) **well . . heart,***a* God graciously accepted the intention, though it could not be fulfilled. (19) **thou shalt not,** bec. a man of blood.*b* 1 Chr. xxviii. 3. (20) **performed his word,** in establishing Sol. on Dav.'s throne. (21) **wherein is the covenant,** referring to the tables of stono wh. contained terms of the covenant.*c*

David's intention to build the temple (*vv.* 17—19).—I. Man's purposes are sometimes greater than his power. Limitations of —1. Character; 2. Body; 3. Culture; 4. Circumstances: want of means, or liberty; 5. Destiny; 6. Life. II. The importance and value of these gracious but unfulfilled intentions. Earnest purposes, sincere desires are facts, and as facts will be recompensed. 1. They are facts to God; 2. They are facts to those who cherish them; 3. Unfulfilled intentions are not without their practical influences on society. III. The comfort which these considerations are calculated to afford. This theme is full of comfort to—1. The poor and uneducated; 2. The suffering; 3. Those who are called to premature death; 4. All good men in the presence of their imperfect lives.*d*

The worship of God should be suitable.—There are some of the heathen that worship the sun for a god, and would offer to the

a 2 Sa. vii. 10—16.

b "Sol., with filial reverence and delicacy of feeling, does not mention the cause of this Divine prohibition." — *Wordsworth.*

c Ex. xxxiv. 28.

v. 18. *Abp. Sumner, Christian Charity*, 173.

v. 19. *Bishop O Beirne*, iii. 213.

d W. L. Watkinson.

"In the spirit of that significant Oriental usage which drops its sandals at the palace-door, the

sun somewhat suitable, and therefore, because they wondered at the sun's swift motion, they would offer a horse with wings. Now a horse is a swift creature, and one of the strongest to continue in motion for a long time together. They having wings added to him, they conceived him a sacrifice somewhat suitable to the sun. Surely much cause have Christians to take care that their sacrifices to the glorious and boundless Majesty be some way suitable to His inconceivable and infinite excellences.[e]

Worship.—

The Pagan's myths through marble lips are spoken,
And ghosts of old beliefs still flit and moan
Round fane and altar overthrown and broken,
O'er tree-grown barrow and grey ring of stone.

Blind Faith had martyrs in those old high places,
The Syrian hill-grove and the Druid's wood,
With mothers offering to the fiend's embraces
Bone of their bone, and blood of their own blood.

Red altars, kindling through that night of error,
Smoked with warm blood beneath the cruel eye
Of lawless power and sanguinary terror,
Throned on the circle of a pitiless sky.

Beneath whose baleful shadow, overcasting
All heaven above, and blighting earth below,
The scourge grew red, the lip grew pale with fasting,
And man's oblation was his fear and woe!

Then through great temples swell'd the dismal moaning
Of dirge-like music and sepulchral prayer;
Pale wizard priests, o'er occult symbols droning,
Swung their white censers in the burden'd air.

As if the pomp of rituals and the savour
Of gums and spices could the Unseen please;
As if His ear could bend, with childish favour,
To the poor flattery of the organ keys!

Feet red from war-fields trod the church-aisles holy
With trembling reverence; and the oppressor there,
Kneeling before his priest, abased and lowly,
Crush'd human hearts beneath his knee of prayer.

Not such the service the benignant Father
Requireth at His earthly children's hands:
Not the poor offering of vain rites, but rather
The simple duty man from man demands.

For earth He asks it: the full joy of heaven
Knoweth no change of waning or increase;
The great heart of the Infinite beats even,
Untroubled flows the river of His peace.[f]

22—26. (22) **altar,** the altar of burnt-offering, in the court of the priests.[a] Sol. was raised up some five feet, so as to be seen by the people. (23) **keepest,** *etc.*, comp. Dc. vii. 9. (24) **with thine hand,** acknowledging that the strength to build the house had come fr. God. (25) **keep,** this Thy further promise. **so that,** *etc.*, this being ever the condition of Div. blessing. (26) **be verified,** proved by experience.[b]

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devout worshipper will put off his travelled-tarnished shoes, will try to divest himself of secular anxieties and worldly projects, when the place where he stands is converted into holy ground by the words, 'Let us worship God.'" — *Dr. J. Hamilton.*

e G. Swinnock.

"Every man ought to consider himself as the minister and steward of the church in his own house. And it is his own fault, and, let me add, his folly, if the church in his house be not a lively and genuine part of that branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church to which he himself belongs." *Bishop Blomfield.*

"It is reported that the king of Morocco told the English ambassador, in King John's time, that he had read St. Paul's Epistles, which he liked so well, that were he to choose his religion, he would embrace Christianity; but he added that every one ought to die in the faith wherein he was born. So it is with many in this day." — *Spenser.*

f Whittier.

the dedicatory prayer

a "Sol. was on a brazen platform, erected for the special purpose, five cubits long

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and broad, and three cubits high (2 Chr. vi. 13), kneeling, and with his hands stretched out to heaven (1 Ki. vii. 54)."—*Keil.*

b 2 Sa. vii. 25; 2 Chr. xxi. 7; Ps. lxxxix. 33, 37, cxxxii 12; Lu. i. 32, 35.

c Evang. Preacher. A man might frame and let loose a star to roll in its orbit, and yet not have done so memorable a thing in the sight of God as he who brings a soul safe to the portals of heaven.

d Bp. Hall.

Divine favour invoked

a "The heaven in its most extended compass. Sol. strikes down all rationalistic assertions, that the Israelites imagined Jehovah to be only a finite national god. The infinitude and supramundane exaltation of God cannot be more clearly and strongly expressed than it is in these words."—*Keil.*

Ac. vii. 49; 1 Ki. xx. 23; Jer. vii. 4; Mic. iii. 11.

b Da. vi. 10.

v. 27. *Dr. S. Clarke*, i. 169; *Dr. J. Hunt*, ii. 19; *J. Bilstone*, 23; *Bp. Horne*, iv. 319; *Dr. J. Duchal*, iii. 373; *J. Fernie*, 176.

vv. 28. 29. *E. P. Waters*, 243.

v 30. *G. Burnet*, i. 55.

The promise of God (*v.* 24).—Three things observable in the text. I. It has pleased God to deal with His people in all ages, by way of promise. II. His power is constantly engaged in fulfilling His promises. It is exercised in proof of—1. His truth in the promises; 2. His supreme and unlimited might; 3. His faithfulnesss. III. There are some special seasons when we are called upon to bear testimony to His faithfulness in His promises: the day of individual conversion, the time of our consecration and dedication, and when we have received extraordinary mercies.*c*

The majesty of God.—It is a deep and difficult thing to conceive properly of God in our thoughts of Him, but especially in our addresses to Him: thus much we know, that, as it is revealed He is a Spirit, we should banish from our minds every idea of His having any form or shape whatever, and only think of Him as an infinitely glorious and unlimited Being. Our heart should adore a spiritual Majesty which it cannot comprehend, and, as it were, lose itself in His infinitude. We must believe Him great without quantity, omnipresent without place, everlasting without time, and containing all things without extent; and when our thoughts are come to the highest, let us stop, wonder, and adore.*d*

27—30. (27) **heaven of heavens,***a* De. x. 14; Ps. cxlviii. 4; Is. lxvi. 1. (28) **respect,** take notice; graciously consider. (29) **eyes..hearken..place,** a blended metaphor. If God's eyes were toward, He would be attentive to listen. (30) **toward this place,** or in this place: comp. Daniel.*b*

Greatness and majesty of God (*v.* 27).—I. The heavens, so vast, glorious, holy, present no limits to presence and manifestation of God: do not provide full scope for manifestation of Divine glory. II. Much less can earthly temples, erected by human hands, do this. III. Yet earthly temples provide for certain peculiar manifestations of the Divine glory: conviction, pardon, reconciliation of man.

Waiting for an answer.—In the International Exhibition of 1862 were two pictures which I think I shall never forget. The first was called "Waiting for the Verdict." Standing at the door of a room where a trial was going on, there was a little gathering of people. A woman—oh, what agony was in her look!—and a dear little child lying against her asleep; another, who looked like the grandmother, holding the youngest child; the grandfather, with one hand fallen down between his legs, the other covering his face, from which the big tears were rolling; the dog looking up and wondering; the elder sister standing there against the door, all anxiety. What meant it all? Before the bar in that court of justice the father was standing, and they were "waiting for the verdict." There was a second picture. The same people standing at the same place, only one is among them we did not see before. A man is sitting on the bench, his wife, with joyful look, embracing him; the dog licking his hand; the grandmother, with eyes swollen with weeping, only they are tears of joy now, holding up a dear little child for a kiss from the father, who a few minutes before had been standing before that bar. Why are they all so changed? Why joy where there was sorrow—happiness where there was misery? A "word only" had done it all. "Not guilty," "The Acquittal."

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31—36. (31) **trespass,** do any kind of wrong in any of the ways wh. might be cleared by an oath.[a] Ex. xxii. 7—11. **the oath,** for the man who swears it. (32) **wicked,**[b] here the man who made false accusations. **justifying,** exonerating. (33) **smitten,** *etc.*, comp. Le. xxvi. 17; De. xxviii. 25. (34) **bring them,** comp. De. xxx. 1—18; Ne. i. 8, 9. (35) **shut up,** Le. xxvi. 19; De. xi. 17, xxviii. 23, 24. (36) **teach,** *etc.*, shows that all affliction was viewed as chastisement and correction, intended for removal of sin.

The house of prayer.—I. Some of the objects of prayer indicated. 1. Forgiveness of sin against man; 2. Deliverance from national disaster; 3. Supplication for material prosperity. II. The spirit of prayer suggested. Faith in God. Holy purpose of obedience.

Swearing by the altar (*v.* 31).—Bishop Patrick alleges that it was the custom of all nations to touch the altar when they made a solemn oath, calling God to witness the truth of what they said, and to punish them if they did not speak the truth: and he supposes that Solomon alludes to this practice in his prayer at the dedication of the temple: "If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him, to cause him to swear, and the oath come before Thine altar in this house." But the royal suppliant says not one word about touching the altar; but clearly refers to the general practice of standing before it, for his words literally are: And the oath come before the face of Thine altar. In imitation of God's ancient people, many of the surrounding nations, among whom Livy and other celebrated writers of antiquity mention the Athenians, the Carthaginians, and the Romans, were accustomed to stand before the altar when they made oath; but it does not appear they laid their hand upon it, and by consequence no argument from the sacred text, nor even from the customs of these nations, can be drawn for the superstitious practice of laying the hand upon the Gospels and kissing them, instead of the solemn form authorised by God Himself, of lifting up the right hand to heaven.[c]

37—43. (37) **famine,** Le. xxvi. 26. **pestilence,** De. xxvi. 25. **blasting,** mildew, De. xxviii. 22. **locust,** De. xxviii. 38, 42. **caterpillar,**[a] not mentioned in Pentateuch. **besiege,** De. xxviii. 52. **plague,** *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 16. **land . . cities,** De. xxviii. 52. (38) **plague . . heart,**[b] the evil in him wh. is cause of outward suffering. (39) **his ways,** as Divinely tested.[c] (40) **fear,**[d] the true godly fear: those forgiven and recovered are made truly humble. (41) **stranger,**[e] comp. Nu. xv. 14. (42) **they shall hear, a** phophecy, but one wh. human foresight could make. (43) **all . . name,** the noblest spirits reached beyond the exclusiveness of Judaism.[f]

The breadth of Divine mercy (*vv.* 41—43).—I. As the heavens imposed no limits to the glory of God, so His mercy was not the exclusive monopoly of Israel. Thus was charity taught to the Jews. II. The temple a house of prayer for all nations. Thus was the hope of mercy proclaimed to the Gentile. III. But the Gentile was to acknowledge Israel's God and Saviour.

Late attendance at public worship.—A want of punctual attention to the hour of commencing divine service is a fault but too prevalent in worshipping assemblies. A worthy clergyman whose congregation had given him much vexation in this

forgiveness of trespass

sending of rain

a Nu. v. 21.

b Eze. xviii. 20.

vv. 35, 36. *Dr. M. Hole On the Liturgy*, ii. 1.

"What I have done is worthy of nothing but silence and forgetfulness; but what God hath done for me is worthy of everlasting and thankful memory."—*Bishop Hall.*

"Whatever difficulties you have to encounter, be not perplexed, but think only what is right to do in the sight of Him who seeth all things, and bear without repining the result."—*Moir.*

"Recognised probity is the surest of all oaths."—*Madame Necker.*

c Paxton.

healing of famine

a "Lit. *consumer;* a more terrible kind of locust."—*Gesenius.*

b "To perceive one's sinfulness."—*Hitzig.*

"To recognise one's sufferings as Div. chastisements."—*Keil.*

c 1 Sa. xvi. 7; 1 Chr. xxviii. 9; Ps. xi. 4, cxxxix. 1, 2; Je. xvii. 10; Jno. xxi. 17; Ac. i. 24; 1 Jno. iii. 20; Re. ii. 23.

d Ps. cxxx. 4.

e Ps. ii. 8; Mat. xii. 42, ii. 1, 2; Ac. viii. 27.

f 2 Ki. xix. 19; Ps. lxvii. 2.

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vv. 37. 39. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 210; *Dr. M. Hole*, ii. 13.

vv. 37, 40. *Bp. Lake*, 200.

v. 38. *Bp. Abernethy*, 216; *Dr. J. Edwards, A Ser.*; *Dr. J. Jamieson*, ii. 49; *T. Biddulph*, iii. 180.

v. 38. *J. Morton*, ii. 285.

v. 39. *Dr. W. Hopkins*, 327.

"All is holy where devotion kneels."—*Holmes.*

respect, began his discourse one Sunday in these terms: "When I came here to begin to worship last Sabbath morning, I believe there were not twenty people in the chapel; at the weekly lecture it was the same; and again this morning: my heart is pained. What can you mean by this conduct? Do you mean to worship God? then I must tell you plainly, and with the authority of a Christian minister, that this is no worship; deceive not yourselves, God will not accept it at your hands." He proceeded to enforce this point with great earnestness and feeling, and produced such an impression on the minds of his hearers that next Sabbath almost every person had assembled by the time he ascended the pulpit. A very common cause of late attendance, especially with the fair sex, is the time employed in dressing. Herbert has some lines so applicable to this sort of apology, that every lady would do well to have them written in letters of gold, and suspended over her toilet, that they might be ever present to her eyes.

To be dressed!
Stay not for the other pin. Why thou hast lost
A joy for it worth worlds!

aid in war

a Ex. vii. 20; Ja. iii. 2; 1 Jno. i—8, 10.

b Da. ix. 5; Ps. cvi. 6.

vv. 44, 45. *Dr. M. Hole*, ii. 25.

"God's covenant with man is a gracious engagement on the part of God to communicate certain unmerited favours to men, in connection with a particular constitution or system, through means of which these favours are to be enjoyed. Hence in Scripture the covenant of God is called His 'counsel,' His 'oath,' His 'promise.'"—*W. L. Alexander.*

c Mariti.

d Cullen.

"A covenant is a contract or agreement between two or more parties on certain terms."—*C. Buck.*

Spurgeon, insisting on brief and varied exercises

44—48. (44) **toward the city,** Heb. the way of the city. (45) **cause,** or right. (46) **sinneth not,**[a] Pr. xx. 9. (47) **bethink,** marg. *bring back to their heart.*[b] (48) **all their heart,** with full sincerity.

The prayer of the captive.—I. Israel may be engaged in wars for God. II. Their commission would not preserve them from the consequences of sin. III. In reverses resulting from sin, if they turned to God—though in a strange land—He would hear and save them.

Praying towards the temple.—By a decree passed in the eighteenth year of the Emperor Adrian, the Jews were forbidden not only to enter into the city of Jerusalem (then called Ælia), but even to turn their looks towards it; which most probably had a reference to this custom of turning their faces towards the Holy City at their prayers. I observed that Mecca, the country of their prophet, and from which, according to their idea, salvation was dispensed to them, is situated towards the south, and for this reason they pray with their faces turned towards that quarter.[c]—The Mexicans prayed generally upon their knees, with their faces turned towards the east, and therefore made their sanctuaries with the door to the west.[d]—In a description of the people of the Ganow hills, we find the same custom prevalent. Their mode of swearing is very solemn: the oath is taken upon a stone, which they first salute, then, with their hands joined and uplifted, their eyes steadfastly fixed to the hills, they call on Mahadeva in the most solemn manner, telling him to witness what they declare, and that he knows whether they speak true or false. They then again touch the stone, with all the appearance of the utmost fear, and bow their heads to it, calling again upon Mahadeva. They also, during their relation, look steadfastly to the hills, and keep their right hand upon the stone. When the first person swore before me, the awe and reverence with which the man swore forcibly struck me; my Moherrir could hardly write, so much was he affected by the solemnity. I understand their general belief to be, that their god resides in the hills; and though this belief may seem

inconsistent with an awful idea of the divinity, these people appeared to stand in the utmost awe of their deity, from the fear of his punishing them for any misconduct in their frequent excursions to the hills.[e]—An hour before sunrise, the coffeegee having prepared our coffee, retired into a corner of the room, and having, without the least reserve, performed the necessary ablutions, spread his garment on the ground, and began his prayers. He turned himself to the east, and though several persons entered and left the apartment during his devotions, he seemed quite absorbed, and rose, and knelt, and prostrated himself with as much appearance of piety as if he had been praying in the holy temple of Mecca itself.[f]

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in meetings for prayer and conference, said, "I never like to have one of my deacons pray for half an hour, and conclude with asking the Lord to forgive our *shortcomings*."

e Asiatic Res.

f Macmichel.

49—53. (49) **cause,** as *v.* 45. (50) **compassion,** power to awaken compassion.[a] (51) **furnace of iron,** De. iv. 20.[b] (52) **eyes,** *etc.*, see note on *v.* 29. (53) **inheritance,**[c] De. iv. 20, ix. 26, 29; Is. xix. 25.

Pleading the promises.—In this prayer the plea rests—I. On the mercy of God (*v.* 50). II. On the covenant of God (*v.* 51). III. On the faithfulness of God (*v.* 53). IV. To us the promises are Yea and Amen in Jesus Christ.

Worship due to God.—The Emperor Augustus hearing that a gentleman of Rome, notwithstanding a great burden of debt wherewith he was oppressed, slept quietly and took his ease, desired to buy the bed that he lodged on, remarking that it seemed to him a wonderful bed whereon a man could sleep that was so deeply involved.[d]—If we thought of our daily obligations to our God, could we lie down to sleep or rest in peace without having rendered to Him the tribute of our praise, and so discharged to that extent the obligation to worship Him?

the covenant pleaded

a Illus. Ezr. 1, 3, vii. 13; No. ii. 6; Ps. cvi. 46.

b Is. xlviii. 10.

c 1 Pe. ii. 9, 10.

"Devotion, when it does not lie under the check of reason, is apt to degenerate into enthusiasm."—*Addison.*

d Spencer.

54—56. (54) **kneeling,** his precise attitude was not given in *v.* 22. (55) **stood,** the proper attitude of blessing. (56) **rest,** as Ex. xxxiii. 14,[a] etc., the rest of God in His temple was pledge of rest for the people.

Solomon's thanksgiving prayer (*vv.* 54—61).—The words in which Solomon blessed the people contained—I. An address to God. This consisted of—1. A thanksgiving for mercies received; 2. A prayer for the continuance of them. II. An exhortation to the people. He besought them—1. To be perfect with the Lord; 2. To preserve continually the frame they now possessed.[b]

True and false worship.—Do you really pray? Do you desire what you ask? or is it a task or a punishment? Are you like the praying-machines used in some heathen countries? The people write prayers on pieces of paper, and put them into a kind of roller or barrel, and every time the roller goes round they reckon it as one prayer. Are you like a boy who was proud because a lady who heard him said, "How sweetly he prays!" and who, after neglecting his prayers for several days, repeated them over as often as would make up for the omission, lest something should happen to him,—but never really prayed till, when an old man, he felt himself to be a sinner, and cried to God for mercy?[c]

Solomon's benediction

a De. iii. 20, xii. 10, xxv. 19.

v. 56. *Zollikoffer.*

ii. 80.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

It is a sad thing to put Christ, and the remission of sin in His name, before poor distressed sinners in such a way that they hardly seem to have a twig to lay hold of, much less a rock to cling to and rest upon.

c The Golden Fountain.

57—61. (57) **let . . us,** as De. xxxi. 6; Jos. i. 5. (58) **incline,** "the doctrine that God inclines men's hearts appears first in Sc. in the Davidic Ps."[a] (59) **cause,** interest. (60) **all the people,** comp. *v.* 43. (61) **perfect,** sincere, whole-hearted,

Solomon's exhortation

a Spk.Com. See Ps. cxix. 36, cxli. 4.

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Comp. Phi. ii. 13; He. xiii. 20, 21.

b 2 Ki. xx. 3; Phi. iii. 12—16.

vv. 57, 58. *Dr. W. Marsh, Pr. Bk.*, etc.

v. 59. *J. Townsend*, 97.

"Oh, how sweet to work all day for God, and then lie down at night beneath His smile." — *M'Cheyne.*

"The world is too much with us." — *Wordsworth.*

thoroughly devoted.[b] **as . . day,** life, one act of worshipping obedience.

The character of God known by the character of His people.— I. We have the abiding presence of God sought (*v.* 57). II. We have the result of that presence stated (*v.* 58). III. We have the lesson for the world taught by the Divine presence and its consequences.

Hearing by the clock.—While the Rev. R. Watson was preaching, one Sabbath morning, at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, he observed a man rise from his seat to look at the clock in the front of the gallery, as though he wished to give the preacher a hint to approach to a conclusion. Mr. Watson observed in a very significant manner, "A remarkable change has taken place among the people of this country, in regard to the public services of religion. Our forefathers put their clocks on the outside of their places of worship, that they might not be too late in their attendance. We have transferred them to the inside of the house of God, lest we should stay too long in His service. A sad and ominous change!" And then, addressing the man whose rude behaviour had called forth the remark, he said, "You need be under no alarm this morning: I shall not keep you beyond the usual time."

62—66. (62) **sacrifice,** for God's acceptance of it, *see* 2 Chr. vii. 1. (63) **peace-offerings,** as part of these could be eaten it became a great feast for the people.[a] (64) **hallow,** *etc.*, prob. the whole area of the court: this was done temporarily, to accommodate the multitudes of persons bringing sacrifices. (65) **from . . Hamath,**[b] indic. the extensive district fr. wh. the people had come. **river of Egypt,**[c] not the Nile, but the *Wady-el-Arish.* (66) **eighth day,** twenty-third of the month. **tents,** not literally such: the word is used for homes.

A rejoicing king and people.—I. A king the subject of popular benediction. Wherefore? Not victory in wars, or popular graces, but carrying out the establishment of religion. II. A people the subjects of home joyfulness. Wherefore? The grateful recognition of God's goodness to king and people.

They blessed the king.—The Hebrew has, for blessed, "thanked." The Tamul translation has, for blessed, "praised." So in Joshua xxii. 33, also in 2 Sam. xxii. 47, and in all other passages where the word occurs (when used in reference to God), it is rendered, "praise," or "praised." The word bless, among the Hindoos, is, I think, not used, as in English, to praise, to glorify, but to confer happiness, to convey a benediction, or to show good-will. St. Paul says, "Without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater;" and this I believe, joined with greatness, is the only idea the Orientals attach to those who bless others. Hence he who blesses another, must be a superior, either in years, rank, or sanctity. The heathen never bless their gods.[d]

Solomon's sacrifice

a "Profusion was a usual feature of the sacrifices of antiquity. 300 oxen formed a common sacrifice at Athens. According to an Arabian historian, the Caliph Moktader sacrificed during his pilgrimage to Mecca, in the year of the Hegira 350, 40,000 camels and cows, and 50,000 sheep. Tavernier speaks of 100,000 victims as offered by the King of Tonquin."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The screen of hills wh. forms the watershed of Cœle Syria." — *Stanley.*

c Ge. xv. 18; 2 Ki. xiv. 25.

v. 66. *J. S. Clarke*, 253; *C. Buchanan*, 151; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 275.

d Roberts.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

B.C. *cir.* 992.

God's promise to Solomon

1—5. (1) **finished,** *etc.*, as ch. vi. 37, 38, vii. 1.[a] (2) **second time,** for first *see* ch. iii. 5; this appearance came at the height of Sol.'s prosperity, as a warning of the subtle dangers by wh. he

was encompassed. **as . . Gibeon,** by night, and through a dream. (3) **eyes and mine heart,** this was fulfilment beyond Sol.'s prayer, ch. viii. 29. (4) **if,** *etc.*, there is always a condition on man's side to God's covenants and promises.[b] (5) **establish,**[c] permanently confirm.

God the only consecrator (*v.* 3).—I. God is the only fountain and source of consecration. II. God can consecrate any house. III. God especially consecrates His own house. IV. God consecrates every believer, making him a temple of the Holy Ghost. —*God the source of stability* (*v.* 5).—He Himself is the Infinite, Eternal, Absolute, Changeless One. He gives stability to His word: "Heaven and earth shall pass," etc. II. His Church: its "foundation is in the holy mountain." III. Every Christian: "never perish" etc., etc.

Jewish worship.—It is said that the Jews had before the doors of their synagogues an iron plate upon which to clean their shoes before entering; and, having entered, they sat silently and reverently, considering Who it was with Whom they had to do. Thus it was of old; but of late, though they come to the synagogues with washed hands and feet, they are as reverent, saith one that was an eye-witness, as grammar boys at school when the master is absent.[e]

6–9. (6) **at all turn,** better trans. *wholly* turn.[a] (7) **proverb,** *etc.*, see De. xxviii. 37. **byword,** *lit.* a sharp, pointed saying.[b] (8) **which is high,** *i.e.* conspicuous now in its glory, shall be conspicuous in its ruin.[c] **hiss,** the expression of contempt.[d] (9) **taken hold,** with idea of bringing in fr. other lands; as well as of applying themselves to.

A fair warning.—I. Punishment without warning is justly censured as tyrannical, cruel, etc. Hence, the substance of laws should be briefly expressed in clear and popular language. II. Violation of law, in spite of plain warning, exposes the lawbreaker to merited chastisement. III. A government that threatens and does not punish is open to the charge of weakness or favouritism. IV. The subsequent history of the Jewish people a commentary on the presumption of man and the justice of God.

An abused warning.—There is a story which tells of a bell which was suspended on a rock of the ocean dangerous to navigation. The waves of the ocean beating upon it caused it to give a noise of warning to keep off the approaching mariner. It is said that at one time some pirates destroyed the bell to prevent the warning. Not long after these very pirates struck upon this rock, and were lost. How many there are who take pains to hush or remove the voice of warning coming forth from the point of danger, who, as soon as the warning ceases, founder upon the rock of temptation, and are lost for ever![e]

10–14. (10) **twenty years,** to be counted fr. foundation of temple in fourth year of Sol.'s reign. **two houses,** the temple taking seven years, the palace thirteen years.[a] (11) **Hiram,** *etc.*, ch. v. **twenty cities,**[b] on the frontier land of Phœnicia and Galilee. Prob. near the Cabul mentioned in Jos. xix. 27. (12) **pleased him not,** poss. he had hoped for a cession of the bay of Accho,[c] so did not care for an inland mountain district. (13) **Cabul,** all mere villages, like the one named Cabul.[d] (14)

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a Comp. 2 Chr. vii. 11, 12.
b Ps. cxxxii. 12.
c 2 Sa. vii. 12, 16; 1 Ki. ii. 4, vi. 12; 1 Chr. xxii. 10.
d R. Berry.
"Look upon doing good as truly your business as prayer, or hearing the word, or meditation, etc. And therefore never think your time misspent which is laid out in visiting the imprisoned or sick, relieving the necessitous, comforting the afflicted, and reducing those that err into the paths of sobriety and truth." — *Lucas.*
e Spencer.

a Divine warning

a 2 Chr. vii. 19.

"The Israelites were not to be cut off, except for an *entire defection.*" — *Spk. Com.*

b Gesenius.

Ps. xliv. 14.

c De. xxix. 24–26; Je. xxii. 8, 9.

d 2 Chr. xxix. 8; Je. xviii. 16; Mic. vi. 16.

e Dr. McCosh. All. to *Ralph the Rover,* by R. Southey.

completion of contract with Hiram

a 1 Ki. vi. 38, vii. 1.

b "These twenty cities were mere villages: Cabul was one of these,

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and the other 19 were prob. small places adjacent to it."—*Thomson.*

c Milman.

d LXX. trans. *frontier land. Josephus* says a Phœnic. word for *unpleasing.* Others think it means *pawned;* others derive fr. verb *to vanish,* so worthless.

"These cities formed, with their territory, the 'boundary' or 'offscouring' (Gebul, or Cabul) of the two dominions, at a later time still known by the general name of 'the boundaries' (coasts or borders) of Tyre and Sidon. Mat. xv. 21; Mk. vii. 24, 31; Lu. vi. 17."—*Stanley.*

Comp. 1 Chr. viii. 1, 2.

"Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath."—*Fuller.*

e Rawlinson, Bamp. Lec.

Solomon's store-cities

a 2 Chr. viii. 8–10.

b LXX. trans. the *akra,* or citadel.

c 1 Ki. xi. 27.

d Jos. xvi. 3, xxi. 21; Ju. i. 29.

e "Though in the East husbands generally pay for their wives, yet dower is given in some cases."—*Spk. Com.*

f Comp. 2 Chr. ix. 4.

sixscore, *etc.,* to show that he was not offended: or perhaps the stipulated price of the cities.

The relations of Hiram and Solomon.—I. Friends and neighbours should be of one mind, and mutually ready to help. II. The return of gratitude should not be measured by the precise value of the excitements of gratitude: otherwise it becomes a mere market price. III. The disposition of the giver is to be more regarded than the intrinsic value of the gift.

Hiram, king of Tyre.—That Hiram was really a Phœnician name, and one which kings were in the habit of bearing, is certain from the Assyrian inscriptions, and from Herodotus, as well as from the Phœnician historians, Dius and Menander. And these last-named writers not only confirm the name as one which a king of Tyre might have borne, but show, moreover, that it was actually borne by the Tyrian king contemporary with Solomon and David, of whom they relate circumstances which completely identify him with the monarch who is stated in Scripture to have been on such friendly terms with these princes. They do not, indeed, appear to have made any mention of David; but they spoke distinctly of the close connection between Hiram and Solomon; adding facts which, though not contained in Scripture, are remarkably in accordance with the sacred narrative. For instance, both Menander and Dius related that "hard questions" were sent by Solomon to Hiram to be resolved by him; while Dius added that Hiram proposed similar puzzles to Solomon in return, which that monarch, with all his wisdom, was unable to answer. We may see in this narrative, not only a resemblance to the famous visit of the Queen of the South (1 Kings x. 1), but also an illustration of the statement that "all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom" (1 Kings x. 24). Again, Menander stated that Hiram gave his daughter in marriage to Solomon. This fact is not recorded in Scripture; but still it is an illustration of the statement that "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites... And he had seven hundred wives, princesses" (1 Kings xi. 1—3). One of them we may well conceive to have been the daughter of the Tyrian king.[e]

15—19. (15) **levy,** or system of forced labour,[a] ch. v. 13—18. **Millo,** prop. *the Millo,*[b] see 2 Sa. v. 9. **wall,** he repaired Dav.'s wall:[c] he may also have extended the wall to enclose the temple-area. **Hazor,** Jos. xi. 1. **Megiddo,** Jos. xii. 21. **Gezer,** Jos. x. 33, xii. 12. (16) **Canaanites . . city,** it seems never to have been conquered by Israel.[d] **present,** or dowry.[e] (17) **built,** or fortified. **Beth-horon,** Jos. x. 10; 2 Chr. viii. 5. (18) **Baalath,** Jos. xix. 44. **Tadmor,** Heb. Tamor, or Tamar. Either a town in the S. of Judæa; or Palmyra.[f] (19) **store,** for provisions, etc. Centres for military operations.[g] **desired,** *etc.,* referring to his pleasure-grounds.[h]

The two builders.—I. The buildings of Solomon—temple—palace—cities—where are they? Of Tadmor (Palmyra) magnificent ruins remain to show what was once the beauty and extent of the city: of the temple three courses of stones in "the place of wailing." II. The building of Christ was greater than Solomon. A kingdom that cannot be moved. A city set on a hill. The Church a city still growing, etc.

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Christ and His Church.—The general consideration, that what there may have been in the world obscurely struggling to be Christian before Christ and His Church, so far from suggesting to us poorer thoughts of what in Him we possess, under how far more glorious aspect does it present that to us! All which men before could conceive but could not realise, could feel after but could not grasp, could dream of but ever when they awoke found nothing in their hands—it is here; "the body is of Christ." And the Church which He has founded, we behold it as sitting upon many waters, upon the great ocean of truth, from whence every stream that has at all or at any time refreshed the earth was originally drawn, and to which it duteously brings its waters again. We may contemplate that Church as having, in that it has the Word and Spirit of its Lord, the measure of all partial truth in itself; receiving the homage of all human systems, meekly, and yet, like a queen, as her right; understanding them far better than they ever understood themselves; disallowing their false, and what of true they have, setting their seal upon that true, and issuing it with a brighter image, and a sharper outline, and a more paramount authority, from her own mint.[e]

20—23. (20) **left,** to mingle with the Israelites in the land. (21) **bond-service,**[a] poss. they had shown dangerous symptoms of disaffection, and were crushed by being put to forced labour, as Is. had been in Egypt. (22) **no bondmen,** comp. 1 Ki. v. 13, 14. Their temporary service was regarded only in the light of a **tax.** (23) **five . . fifty,** comp. ch. v. 16.

The king's plans for the benefit of the land.—I. His buildings. 1. The temple; 2. Storehouses for times of need. This having regard for things spiritual and temporal. II. In making this provision he spared his own people all servile labour possible.

Partner with Christ.—As merchants who are of one company, and become partners, are partakers of all the profits, losses, and damages which grow of their merchandise; even so Jesus Christ, by reason of that society we have together with Him, giveth us a part, and we, likewise, give Him of all that we have and possess. The difference is in this, that the gains and losses amongst men are equal and common amongst them all; but here we gather up all the fruits that arise of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; He, on the contrary part, taketh upon Him and chargeth Himself with all the damages and losses that come of our disobedience.[b]

Clarkson and slavery.—In 1785, Dr. Pickard, Master of Magdalen College in the University of Cambridge, gave out the following subject for one of the University prizes: "Anne liceat invitos in servitutem dare?" "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" Mr. Thomas Clarkson, who was then a student at the University, determined to become a candidate for the prize. He took great pains to obtain the fullest information on the subject, and had the happiness of attaining the object of his ambition. After reading his essay publicly as usual, in the Senate House, he set out for London on horseback. While on the road, the subject of the essay entirely engrossed his thoughts; he became at times seriously affected as he travelled on. He once stopped his horse, and dismounted, and sat down on a bank by the roadside. Here he tried to persuade himself that the contents of the essay which he had read in the Senate House the day before were not true. The more, however, he re-

g 1 Ki. iv. 26.

h Ecc. ii. 4.

"All that we now deem of antiquity, at one time was new; and what we now defend by examples on a future day will stand as precedents."—*Tacitus.*

"The architect must not only understand drawing, but music."—*Vitruvius.*

i Abp. Trench.

the remnant of the Canaanites reduced to bondage

a Ju. i. 28, 30, 33, 35.

"True freedom is a freedom from the servitude of sin, from the seduction of a misguided judgment and the allurement of any ensnaring forbidden object; consisting in an unbounded amplitude and enlargedness of soul towards God, and indetermination to any interior good; resulting from an entire subjection to the Divine will, a submission to the order of God, and steady adherence to Him."—*John Howe.*

b Cawdray.

"Rejoice in your liberty, but in your lawful liberty. True freedom consists with the observance of law. Adam was as

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free in Paradise as in the wilds to which he was banished for his transgression. I hold that true freedom and the observance of law are perfectly consistent with each other." —*W. L. Thornton.*

"The abettors of slavery are weaving the thread in the loom; but God is adjusting the pattern. They are asses, harnessed to the chariot of liberty, and whether they will or no, must draw it on."—*Beecher.*

"The greatest glory of a free-born people is to transmit that freedom to their children."—*Havard*

e Percy Anec.

Solomon's navy

a Ex. xxiii. 14—17.

b 2 Chr. viii. 14.

c Nu. xxxiii. 35; De. ii. 8.

d "As the entire tract about Elath (Akaba) is destitute of trees, it is conjectured that the wood for the fleet was cut in Lebanon, floated to Gaza by sea, and thence conveyed across to Ezion-geber by land carriage."—*Spk. Com.*

e Milman.

f Lassen. Thenius, Ewald. Bertheau.

g Winer, Keil, Twisleton, Wordsworth.

h "Poss. 30 talents were given to Hiram for his help." — *Wordsworth.*

i Dr. Barrow.

flected on the authorities on which he knew them to be founded the more he gave them credit, the more he was convinced that it was an imperious duty in some one to undertake the glorious task of putting an end to the sufferings of the unhappy Africans. Agitated in this manner, he reached London; where he shortly afterwards published an English translation of his essay. His mind, however, was not satisfied that this was all humanity required of him. To make the case of the Africans known, was desirable as a first step; but would this of itself put a stop to the horrors of the trade? He believed not; he believed there could be no hope of success, unless some one would resolve to make it the business of his life. The question then was, was he himself called upon to do it? His own peace of mind required that he should give a final answer to the question. To do this, he retired frequently into solitude. The result was, that after the most mature deliberation, he determined to devote his whole life, should it be necessary, to the cause. Of the glorious fruits of this sublime act of devotion, the reader need scarcely be told. From the latter end of December, 1786, till the year 1794, Mr. Clarkson laboured with such unceasing assiduity to achieve the work of African emancipation, that his constitution was at length literally shattered to pieces; his hearing, memory, and voice, were nearly gone; he was, in short, utterly incapable of any further exertion, and was obliged, though with extreme reluctance, to be borne out of the field where he had placed the great honour and pride of his life. After eight years' retirement, he felt his constitution so far recruited, that he returned again to the contest; and has had the proud satisfaction of living to see the noble object of his life's solicitude at length accomplished, by the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade—the Magna Charta of Africa.*e*

24—28. (24) **unto her house,** ch. vii. 8; 2 Chr. viii. 11. (25) **three times,** on the occasions of the appointed feasts.*a* **offer,** not in person, but through the priests.*b* (26) **Ezion-geber,**[c] at northern end of Elanitic gulf.*d* (27) **shipmen,** skilled sailors. Israelites had no experience of the sea. (28) **Ophir,** only sugg. can be given as to its situation. *See* Gen. x. 29. The countries chiefly favoured are Africa,*e* India,*f* Arabia.*g* **four . . talents,** comp. 2 Chr. viii. 18.*h*

Solomon's good example (*v.* 25).—Not only did he build the temple, but regularly visited it. It is the duty of the highest as well as of the lowest to attend public worship.—*The effort of a wise government* (*v.* 26).—To preserve existing prosperity and discover new sources of wealth.

Example and precept. — It was Xenophon's observation, grounded upon his own experience, that the memory of Socrates' conversation did greatly profit his acquaintance. And Seneca saith that the crowd of philosophers which followed the same wise man derived more of their ethics from his manners than his words. And he that shall reflect upon the story concerning his behaviour, when he was by malicious envy persecuted to death, may, perhaps, be more edified thereby than by all his subtle discourses about death and the soul's state after it.*i*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

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1—5. (1) **Sheba,** "in Arabia Felix, in the northern portion of what is now called Yemen."[a] **fame . . Lord,** the fame given to him by Jehovah.[b] **hard questions,** riddles. Verbal puzzles were the fashion of the age.[c] (2) **train,**[d] or caravan. **spices,**[e] Arabian Sheba was the great spice country of the ancient world. **precious stones,** onyx and emerald, and pearls, fr. Pers. Gulf. (3) **questions,** problems, riddles. (4) **house,** his palace. (5) **meat,** *etc.*, comp. ch. iv. 22, 23. **ascent,**[f] private way to the temple across the Tyropœum Valley: an arched viaduct, the remains of wh. have been recently discovered.[g]

The queen and the king.—I. The visit of the queen illustrates the unsatisfying nature of earthly rank, wealth, glory. Her soul unsatisfied. She hears of Solomon and of the name of the Lord, and is prompted to make a long journey. II. Her reception by the king illustrates the welcome given to inquirers by One who is greater than Solomon.

Paths consecrated to kings (*v.* 4).—By these words we may understand that this ascent was consecrated to the use of Solomon alone. Thus we are told by Sir George Staunton, in his *Account of the First Presentation of the British Embassy* (vol. ii. p. 229), that "on his entrance into the tent of the Emperor of China mounted immediately the throne by the front steps consecrated to his use alone." He also informs us that "one highway was reserved for the use of the Emperor alone, this was rendered perfectly level, dry, and smooth: cisterns were contrived on the sides of the imperial road, to hold water for sprinkling it occasionally, in order to keep down the dust; parallel to the Emperor's was another road, not quite so broad, nor swept continually with so much care, but perfectly commodious and safe; this was intended for the attendants of his imperial majesty, and upon this the British Embassy was allowed to pass. All other travellers were excluded from these two privileged roads, and obliged to make out a path wherever they were able."

6—9. (6) **acts,** marg. *sayings.* (7) **prosperity,** may mean *goodness;* but comp. *v.* 5. (8) **happy,** greatly privileged to serve so great and wise a king.[a] (9) **blessed,** *etc.*,[b] comp. 2 Chr. ii. 12; Ezr. 1, 3.

The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon (*vv.* 6, 7).—Notice—I. The surprise occasioned by an acquaintance with Solomon. His wisdom extended to things—1. Natural; 2. Political; 3. Moral; 4. Religious. II. The surprise which an acquaintance with Jesus Christ will occasion. 1. The glory of His person; 2. The felicity of His people.[c]

The half not told.—A minister once preached, in a country village in Lincolnshire, from "The half was not told me." The words were considered in an accommodated view, as appropriate to the felicity of the righteous, and also as awfully applicable to the case of the ungodly, throughout the endless ages of eternity. When speaking on the latter head, a man exceedingly intoxicated rushed into the room, sat down, and behaved with decorum during the service. After worship was concluded, it was found

visit of the queen of Sheba

a "Some think it was in African Ethiopia, *i.e.* Abyssinia, towards the south of the Red Sea."—*Jamieson.* Mat. xii. 42.
b *Wordsworth.* "His moral and religious wisdom."—*Spk. Com.* "In regard to the name of the Lord."—*Keil.*
c "For legendary specimens of these trials of wit, see *Stanley, Jew. Ch.* ii. 209.
d Heb. *chayil,* with great power, or grandeur.
e Such as frankincense, myrrh, opobalsam, gum tragacanth, and ladanum.
f "Word used is *olah,* wh. means burnt-offering. Comp. Eze. xl. 26, however."—*Wordsworth.*
g *Robinson.* *Bp. Hall, Contemp. Noel Alexander, Hist. Eccles.* iii. 289.
v. 1. *Dr. R. Hawker,* v. 177.

her praise of the king's greatness

a Mat. xiii. 16, 17; Jn. x. 23, 24.
b Pr. viii. 15.
vv. 6, 7. *W. A. Gunn,* 100; *J. H. Stewart,* 39; *C. J. F. Clinton,* 32.
v. 8. *Zollikoffer,* ii. 168.
v. 9. *Dr. J. Abbadie,* ii. 113; *Abp. Drummond,* 181; *D. W. Garrow,* 425.
c *C. Simeon, M.A.*
"Ships, wealth, general confi-

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dence.—all were his; he counted them at break of day; and when the sun set! where were they?"—*Byron.*

that he had thus intruded himself in consequence of a wager. Some one offered to lay him a tankard of ale that he durst not venture in. "Yes," added he, with an oath; "and if hell-door was open, I would go in." In a few days, death, the king of terrors, arrested his awful progress, cut the brittle thread of life, and consigned him over to the retributions of eternity.

the king and queen exchange gifts

10—13. (10) **spices,** *besamim,* fr. *basam,* to be fragrant, whence balsam.[a] (11) **almug trees,** "Hebraised form of a Deccan word for sandal wood, wh. grows only on the coast of Malabar, south of Goa."[b] (12) **pillars,** balustrades.[c] **harps,**[d] Heb. *cinnôr.* **psalteries,** Heb. *nebel:* the triangular-shaped *harp,* played with a plectrum; and the *lyre* played with the hand. (13) **all her desire,** such interchange of presents was common. **royal bounty,** *i.e.* gifts of his own selection.

Interchange of gifts.—I. The queen is not content with words of praise and thanks. Gives practical expression to her gratitude. Verbal thanks useless if the life be void of lovely deeds. II. Solomon needed not her gifts. Gave greater in return. Our gifts to Christ not to be compared with His to us.

Tribute-bearers.—"Tribute-bearers," says Mr. Sharpe, in his *Illustrations of the Bible from the Ancient Monuments,* "bringing, among other gifts, ivory, ebony, apes, ostrich eggs, and feathers from Ethiopia to Thothmosis III., form part of a procession sculptured on the wall of an underground tomb near Thebes. As Ophir, the port to which Solomon traded, was probably near to Sonakin on the west coast of the Red Sea, in the neighbourhood of the Nubian gold mines, his ships naturally brought him some of the same rarities as Thothmosis received from that country. The almug wood was probably ebony. The world translated 'peacocks' probably meant parrots, which are natives of Ethiopia. It is the root of the Greek word *psittakos,* a parrot. Peacocks are not found so far to the north, and the situation of Ophir must be fixed by the gold mines.

Solomon's gold

14—17. (14) **six .. gold,** by one estimate £3,646,350 of our money;[a] by another as much as £7,780,000.[b] (15) **merchantmen,** or retailers. **the spice merchants,** the large wholesale traffickers.[c] **Arabia,** or the *mingled people,* tributary tribes. 2 Chr. xvii. 11. **governors,** officers who ruled under authority, not as kings. (16) **targets,** large long shields coated with gold.[d] **beaten,** out into plates for coating. (17) **shields,** a smaller kind.[e] **forest,** *etc.,* ch. vii. 2.

The shields of King Solomon, and our shield.—I. Those of Solomon were—1. Numerous; 2. Costly; 3. Penetrable: 4. Stored away from their wearers; 5. Worn only on state occasions; 6. Worn, not by the king, but by his guard. II. Our shield is—1. One—the Lord God is the sun and shield; 2. A free gift; 3. Impenetrable to even "fiery darts;" 4. Always at hand; 5. Not intended for show but use; 6. Worn by ourselves.

Targets.—The word *tsinnah,* used for those martial ensigns of royal dignity, which were carried before King Solomon, and which our version renders targets, was supposed by the Septuagint to signify spears or lances: and as the word is to be understood to signify some sharp-pointed weapon, it may be more natural to understand it of a lance, than of a defensive piece of armour

a Gesenius.

"The genuine balsam, which grew near Jericho, and at Engaddi, was introduced into Palestine by the Queen of Sheba."—*Josephus.*

b Stanley.

a "The wood is very heavy, hard, and fine-grained, and of a beautiful garnet colour."—*Smith's Bib. Dic.*

c Keil.

d 2 Chr. ix. 11.

e Ps. xcii. 1—3.

a Keil.

b Poole.

"The revenue of modern Persia is under three millions."—*Spk. Com.*

c Wordsworth.

"Customs duties which the merchants not in the royal employ were obliged to pay out of their profit."—*Ewald.*

d "State shields usually hung up in the palace, or on the walls outside it, and worn by the bodyguard on state occasions."—*Stanley.*

with a short sharp-pointed umbo in the middle, considering that shields of gold were also carried before this prince, at solemn seasons. One can hardly find a disposition to admit, that two sorts of things so much alike as targets and shields, should be meant here; and if such similar defensive pieces of armour were hardly meant, the translation of the Septuagint is as natural as any, to say nothing of the authority of so ancient a version, in which, so far as appears by Lambert Bos, all the copies, which frequently disagree in other matters, concur. But whatever we may think of this way of translating the original word, we can hardly suppose such martial ensigns of honour were unknown in the time when this translation was made. It is certain they now appear in the Levant. Thus Windus, in his description of a pompous cavalcade of the Emperor of Morocco, tells us, that after several parties of people were passed, "came Muley Mahomet Lariba, one of the Emperor's sons; he is alcade of the stables, or master of the horse: there attended him a guard of horse and foot, at the head of which he rode with a lance in his hand, the place where the blade joins to the wood covered with gold." Soon after which came the emperor himself.*f*

18—23. (18) **of ivory,** not solid, but veneered with ivory intermingled with gold.*a* (19) **stays,** or arms. **lions,** figures supporting the arms, emblems of sovereignty, as lion is natural king of beasts. (20) **twelve lions,** represent. of 12 tribes. (21) **nothing accounted of,** bec. so abundant. (22) **at sea,** on the Mediter. **Tharshish,** Tartessus in Spain,*b* a great trading place fr. the earliest times. **ivory,** or elephants' teeth. **apes,** a long-tailed monkey. **peacock,** prob. a native of India. It may, however, mean *parrots.* (23) **all the kings, of** his age.

Degrees of comparison (*v.* 23).—I. The kings of the earth were, at that time, numerous, rich, powerful, learned—they included the chiefs of the famous monarchies of Egypt, Assyria, etc. II. The king of the Holy Land; Solomon excelled them all in riches and wisdom. III. The King of kings and Lord of lords. The source of wealth and wisdom. A greater than Solomon is here.

The magnificence of Solomon.—The magnificence of Solomon, particularly with respect to his drinking vessels, has not been exceeded by modern Eastern princes. They were all of gold, and it should seem of the purest gold. The gold plate of the kings of Persia has been extremely celebrated, and is mentioned in Sir J. Chardin's note on this passage of the sacred historian. He observes, that the plate of the king of Persia is of gold, and that very fine, exceeding the standard of ducats, and equal to those of Venice, which are of the purest gold. The vessels of gold, we are told in Olearius, were made by the order of Shah Abbas, esteemed the most glorious of the princes of the Sefi royal family, who died 1629. It seemed that he caused seven thousand two hundred marks of gold to be melted upon this occasion; that his successors made use of it whenever they feasted strangers; and that it consisted chiefly of dishes, pots, flagons, and other vessels for drinking. A French mark is eight of their ounces, and is but four grains lighter than an English ounce troy. Abbas then melted, on this occasion, near thirty-six thousand English troy ounces of the purest gold, or almost forty-one

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e 1 Ki. xiv. 27.

"Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs, a pious minister, mentions the case of a rich man, who, when he lay on his sick bed, called for his bags of money; and having laid a bag of gold to his heart, after a little while he bade them take it away, saying, 'It will not do! it will not do!"—*Arvine.*

f Harmer.

his throne and riches

a "The gilding is to be so understood that only the wood and other metals are covered with gold, and the ivory is inserted within the gilded parts."—*Keil.*

b Two places are supposed. Tartessus in Spain, and Tarsus in Cilicia.

Ps. xlviii. 7; Is. xxiii. 1, lxvi. 19; Jon. i. 3; Je. x. 9; Eze. xxvii. 12.

"If men were content to grow rich somewhat more slowly, they would grow rich more surely. If they would use their capital within reasonable limits, and transact with it only so much business as it could fairly control, they would be far less liable to lose it. Excessive profits always involve the liability of great risks — as in a lottery, in which there are

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high prizes, there must be a great proportion of blanks." — *Wayland.*

"Without a rich heart wealth is an ugly beggar." —*Emerson.*

three-fourths Jewish talents. Astonishing magnificence of Persia! Nor have we reason to think that of Solomon was inferior. We may believe, sure, his royal drinking vessels were of equal weight, when the two hundred targets Solomon made weighed but little less than the drinking vessels of Shah Abbas. Sir J. Chardin's way of comparing the glory of Solomon with that of a most illustrious monarch of Persia of late ages, is perhaps one of the most efficacious methods of impressing the mind with an apprehension of the magnificence of this ancient Israelitish king, and, at the same time, appears to be perfectly just.[c]

24—29. (24) **all the earth,** fig. of speech to describe Sol.'s extensive fame. (25) **rate,** fixed sum as tribute. (26) **bestowed,** divided to the several cities: ch. ix. 19. (27) **as stones,** a strong fig. to produce deep impression of Sol.'s wealth. **sycamore,** the fig-mulberry.[a] (28) **linen yarn,** prob. should be trans. a *troop,* or company.[b] (29) **six hundred,** *etc.,* about £35. **kings . . Hittites,** to whom Sol. supplied them.[c]

The wisdom of Solomon (*v.* 24).—I. The source of it. (1) God gave it (2) in answer to prayer (3) by use of means, observation, meditation, intercourse with men of other lands. II. Its attractiveness. (1) It was heard of far and wide; (2) People came to hear it, and see its fruit; (3) They presently saw that wisdom, without grace, was not sufficient to keep Solomon from sin.

Horses in Egypt.—The Egyptian horses were held in great estimation in Syria and the neighbouring countries. The breed seems to have been introduced into Egypt at a very remote period; for the cavalry of Pharaoh was numerous and completely trained to war, when the people of Israel were delivered from his yoke: "But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea." The dreadful overthrow which Pharaoh received at the Red Sea, did not prevent his successors from again directing their attention to the rearing of horses for the purpose of war: for the numerous and splendid studs of Solomon were chiefly formed of Egyptian horses; and in the fifth year of his son Rehoboam, Shishak, King of Egypt, invaded Canaan "with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen." In times long posterior, the prophet Jeremiah addressed the forces of Pharaoh Neco, which the King of Babylon routed near the Euphrates, in these words: "Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets. Come up, ye horses, and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth." From these passages, it may be certainly inferred, that the strength of the Egyptian armies chiefly consisted in cavalry and chariots of war. The Egyptian warrior adorned the neck of his charger with small bells, which were of great use when he had to engage with enemies mounted on camels, the noise of which these animals cannot endure. In allusion to this custom, which was probably adopted by Solomon, who delighted so much in pomp and show, it is promised, "upon the bells of the horses shall be written, Holiness to the Lord."[d]

his horses and chariots

a Ficus sycomorus. Linnæus.

b "Sol. had horses out of Egypt; and the troop of the king's merchantmen received a troop (of horses) at a fixed price." —Rendering proposed by *Gesenius.*

c "The king's intended were probably Sol.'s vassals, whose armies were at his disposal, if he required their aid."—*Spk. Com.*

De. xvii. 16; Is. xxxi. 1; Ho. xiv. 3.

"A distinguished man lay on his death-bed, when a great mark of distinction and honour was brought to him. Turning a cold glance on the treasure he would once have clutched with an eager grasp, he said with a sigh, 'Alas! this is a very fine thing in this country; but I am going to a country where it will be of no use to me.'" — *Dr. Haven.*

d Paxton.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

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1—4. (1) **strange women,** foreigners,[a] who introduced their idolatries into the capital and court. **together with,** besides:[b] the censure does not apply to her. **Zidonians,** Phœnicians.[c] (2) **Lord said,** Ex. xxxiv. 16.[d] **clave,** intim. that he devoted himself to sensual pleasures to the neglect of religion and government. (3) **seven hundred,** *etc.*[e] these numbers are so large, it has been suggested that there is corruption in the text wh. should read 70. **princesses,** daughters of the kings and governors of tributary nations. (4) **old,** fifty or fifty-five. Such a self-indulgent life made him prematurely old.

Solomon's fall.—I. The beginning (*vv.* 1—4). II. The progress (*vv.* 5—8). III. The end (*vv.* 9—13). Learn—I. What it teaches:—(1) That for the sinful heart outward prosperity is allied to spiritual dangers; (2) That knowledge is no protection against moral shortcomings. II. How it warns us—(1) To watch; (2) Pray.

Backsliding.—The soul of man is called the "temple of the Holy Ghost." As God pulled down His temple when it became a "den of thieves," so He forsaketh the temple of the soul, and taketh His grace from her (as from a divorced spouse) when she lusteth after other loves. With any talent He giveth this charge, "Use and increase it until I come;" being left, at last He cometh to see what we have done. The seed was sown, this year the Lord calls for fruit, but none will come; the next year, and the next after, but none comes; at last the curse goeth forth, "Never fruit grow upon thee more." Then, as the fig-tree began to wither, so his gifts begin to pine as if a worm were still gnawing at them; his knowledge loseth his relish, like the Jews' manna; his judgment rusts like a sword which is not used; his zeal trembleth as though it were in a palsy; his faith withereth as though it were blasted; and the image of death is upon all his religion. *f*

5—8. (5) **went after,** not merely permitted idolatry in his capital, but was himself snared by it.[a] **Ashtoreth,** Astarte, female deity of the Phœnicians.[b] **Milcom,** or Molech, 2 Ki. xxiii. 13. (6) **not fully,** Sol. never gave up the worship of Jehovah, but blended it with other worship. (7) **Chemosh,** supreme deity of Moabites.[c] **in the hill,** afterwards known as Olivet:[d] outside the actual city, but opposite Jehovah's temple. (8) **all his wives,** *i.e.* affording each the opportunity of continuing her native idolatry.

Solomon's life; its spiritual significance (*v.* 6).—Amongst the many instructive things which we discover in the life of Solomon are the following:—I. The co-existence of good and evil in the same human soul. There was much spiritual good in Solomon. But there was much within him that was bad also. II. The energy of the degenerating tendency in human nature. This in Solomon was stronger than—1. The influence of parental piety; 2. His own religious convictions; 3. His own clearest conceptions of duty. III. The utter insufficiency of all earthly good to satisfy the mind. Notwithstanding all his glory, he says, "All is vanity." IV. The superiority of true thoughts to all the other

Solomon's fall

a De. xvii. 16, 17.

b "Holy Scrip. recog. Phar.'s daugh. as his wife,—the wife of his youth and and of his better days." — *Wordsworth.*

c "There is a tradition recorded by Menander, that Sol. married a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre."—*Spk.Com.*

d Ge x. 15; De. vii. 1—4; Ezr. ix. 1; Ne. xiii. 23.

e "In the E., at the present day, the extent of a man's harem rises with his rank; and usually the king considers it a sort of duty, a piece of necessary state, to have most of all, —more than any of his subjects can afford to maintain."—*Kitto.*

f H. Smith (continued in the next illustration).

his idolatry

a De. xi. 28, xiii. 2, xxviii. 14.

b "Believed to be the moon-goddess, embodying the idea of productive power. She has also been identified with the Assyrian divinity *Ishtah*, who represents the planet *Venus.*

c "War-god of Moab."—*Stanley*

d "Hence that part of Olivet was called the high-place of Tophet. (Je. vii. 30—34.) And

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the hill is still known as the Mount of Offence, or the Mount of Corruption." — *Jamieson.*

Je. xxxii. 35; 2 Ki. xxiii. 13, 14; Je. xlviii. 13.

e Dr. Thomas.

"The shadows of our own desires stand between us and our better angels, and thus their brightness is eclipsed." — *Dickens.*

f H. Smith (continued from the last illustration).

God is angry with Solomon

a 1 Ki. xii. 20.

b "Even the reservation of one tribe is called a gift; for all were forfeited by Sol.'s idolatry."— *Wordsworth.*

1 Ki. xi. 30, 31.

v. 9. *W. May*, 82.

It is said of Tully when he was banished from Italy, and of Demosthenes when he was banished from Athens, that they wept every time they looked towards their own country; and is it strange that a poor deserted believer should mourn every time he looks heavenward?

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Playfere.

"The soul once tainted with so foul a crime, no more shall glow with friendship's hallow'd ardour; those holy beings whose superior care guides erring mortals to the

productions of man. Solomon accomplished many material works: but what were they all compared with his thoughts contained in the Book of Proverbs? what are they as to their utility or duration?[e]

2 *Backsliding.*—After this he thinketh, like Samson, to pray as he did, and speak as he did, and hath no power; but wondereth, like Zedekiah, how the Spirit is gone from him. Now, when the good Spirit is gone, then cometh the spirit of blindness, and the spirit of terror, and the spirit of fear, and all to seduce the spirit of man. After this, by little and little, first he falls into error—then he comes into heresy—at last he plungeth into despair; after this, if he inquire, God will not suffer him to learn; if he read, God will not suffer him to understand; if he hear, God will not suffer him to remember; if he pray, God seemeth unto him like Baal, who could not hear; at last he beholdeth his wretchedness, as Adam looked upon his nakedness, and mourneth for his gifts, as Rachel wept for her children, "because they were not." All this cometh to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."[f]

9—13. (9) **twice,** ch. iii. 5, ix. 2. (10) **commanded,** as ch. vi. 12. (11) **Lord said,** appearing in some direct way, as on the two previous occasions. **rend,** as a tear in a garment divides it into two pieces. **servant,** or one of thy subjects. Ref. is to Jeroboam.[a] (12) **David . . sake,** 2 Sa. vii. 15; 2 Chr. vi. 6. (13) **all,** the entire number of tribes, **one tribe,**[b] Judah and including Benj.

Solomon's fall (*v.* 9).—Consider—I. Solomon's fall. Notice—1. How it began; 2. To what an extent it proceeded. He suffered his wives to commit idolatry in the land: he built temples for their gods even in Jerusalem itself: he actually united with them in the worship of their idols; 3. With what aggravations it was attended; 4. With what consequences it was followed. II. The instruction to be gathered from it. 1. That temporal prosperity is very unfavourable for spiritual advancement; 2. That however advanced any man may be in age or piety, he is still in danger of falling; 3. That smaller sins, if not guarded against in time, will issue in the greatest; 4. That every sin we commit is aggravated by the mercies we have received.[c]

Occasion of backsliding.—Gregorie writeth, "The remembrance of former vertues doth many times so besot and inveigle a man, that it makes him like a blind asse, fall down into a ditch." When Orpheus went to fetch his wife Eurydice out of hell, he had her granted to him upon condition that he should not turn back his eyes to looke upon her till he had brought her into heaven; yet having brought her forward a great way, at length his love was so excessive, that he could not continue any longer, but would needs have a sight of her. Whereupon forthwith he lost both her sight and herselfe; shee suddenly againe vanishing away from him.[d]

Voluntary backsliding. — God does not predestinate man to fail. That is strikingly told in the history of Judas. "From a ministry and apostleship Judas fell, that he might go to his own place." The ministry and apostleship were that to which God had destined him. To work out that, was the destiny appointed to him, as truly as to any of the other apostles. He was called, elected to that. But when he refused to execute that mission,

the very circumstances which, by God's decree, were leading him to blessedness, hurried him to ruin. Circumstances prepared by eternal love became the destiny which conducted him to everlasting doom. He was a predestined man—crushed by his fate. But he went to his own place. He had shaped his own destiny. So the ship is wrecked by the winds and waves—hurried to its fate. But the wind and waves were in truth its best friends. Rightly guided, it would have made use of them to reach the port; wrongly steered, they became the destiny which drove it on the rocks. Failure—the wreck of life, is not to be impiously traced to the will of God. God will have all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth. God willeth not the death of a sinner.

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path of virtue, affrighted at impiety like thine, resign their charge to baseness and to ruin"—*Johnson*

14—17. (14) **stirred up,** overruling the ambition of Hadad so as to make him his agent in punishing Sol.[a] **king's seed,** of royal family. (15) **in Edom,**[b] 2 Sa. viii. 14. (16) **every male,** evidently meaning all he could find. (17) **Egypt,** the nearest country in which he might hope for protection.

The little child, Hadad (*v.* 17).—Sketch the history. Subject of this address: the perils, safety, and helpers of little children. I. The little child's peril. Yours are of another kind than Hadad's: yet they are very great, arising from—(1) Evil companions, who would entice you to sin; (2) A wicked tempter, who lies in wait to destroy: (3) Foolish and bad books, that deceive the ignorant; (4) Your own heart, in which folly is bound up; (5) The world with its many seductions, customs, etc. II. The little child's safety. In what does it consist? not in fighting, though even little children may strive against sin. Hadad found safety in flight. This you must do. He fled into Egypt, and returned thence with a revengeful spirit. You must "flee for refuge to the hope set before you." Jesus is the refuge for little children; seek safety in the protecting love of Jesus now. III. The little child's helpers. Hadad could not go to Egypt alone, could not walk so far, did not know the way. You need guidance if *you* would be safe. Your heavenly Father's servants are willing to guide you. Who are they? Teachers, etc. They know the way. Have been there themselves. They know the blessedness of safety in Jesus. Learn:—1. Do not stop till your perils are greater, before you "fly for your life." (*Ill.* Lot, Sodom.) 2. Ask your teachers, etc., at once, what you must do to be saved.[c]

Slight backsliding.—At Preston, at Malines, at many such places, the lines go gently asunder: so fine is the angle, that at first the paths are almost parallel, and it seems of small moment which you select. But a little farther one of them turns a corner, or dives into a tunnel; and, now that the speed is full, the angle opens up, and, at the rate of a mile a minute, the divided convoy flys asunder; one passenger is on the way to Italy, another to the swamps of Holland; one will step out in London, the other in the Irish Channel. It is not enough that you look for the better country; you must keep the way: and a small deviation may send you entirely wrong.[d]

18—22. (18) **Midian,** prob. a city so called.[a] **Paran,** desert of *El Tih*, south of Judæa,[b] Ge. xiv. 6. **victuals,** regular allowance for his support. (19) **Tahpenes,** prob. *head, or origin*

Hadad

a "These adversaries must have constantly reminded him that he owed the quiet possession of the throne, as well as the peaceful sovereignty of the whole kingdom inherited from his father, only to the grace, truth, and long-suffering of the Lord."—*Kitt.*

"The writer has not followed chronological order; Hadad's return to Edom, and Rezon's occupation of Damascus, belong to the early years of Sol.'s reign. See 1 Ki. iv. 24."—*Spk. Com.*

b Nu. xxiv. 18, 19; 1 Chr. xviii. 12, 13.

c Hive, S. S. Address.

It was an excellent rule which Marcus Antonius prescribed to himself in his private meditations: "Manage," says he, "all your actions and thoughts in such a manner, as if you were just going out of the world."

d Dr. J. Hamilton.

Hadad and Pharaoh

a The Vatican Sept. reads, *out of the city Midian.*

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b "Borders on the E. on Edom, on the N. on south extremity of Pal., and is the most northern district of the Sinaitic peninsula: the wilderness lying between Idumæa and Egypt." — *Keil.*
c "Also name of a city, Eze. xxx. 18; and of an Eg. goddess."— *Wordsworth.*
d A. Hornick.

Rezon

a Ewald.

b 2 Sa. x. 8, 18.

vv. 23—25. *Crit. Sac. Thes. Nov.* i. 721.

c W. Nicholson.

Jeroboam

a From the Heb. *rabab*, to be many, and *am*, people.
b "Some think this means that he closed up the vacant space between Zion and Moriah: as there had been no hostile incursions to make breaches." —*Ewald; Keil.*
c "As Ahijah afterwards rebuked Jeroboam for his sins (1 Ki. xiv. 6—16), he cannot be regarded as in any way conniving at *the means* which Jeroboam took for the attainment of *the end* wh. the prophet foretold." — *Wordsworth.*
d C. Venn.

Ahijah predicts the division of the kingdom

of the age. A name not found on the Eg. monuments.[c] (20) **Genubath,** not noticed in Script. (21) **let me,** a refugee could not leave court without the king's permission: esp. one who had become the king's brother-in-law. (22) **what,** *etc.*, evidently Hadad hid his real intentions.

Punishment of backsliding.—When Amurath, emperor of the Turks, had notice given him that a doctor of law had cheated a poor pilgrim that was gone to Mecca, and at the man's return would not restore to him the jewels he had entrusted with him, but resolutely denied that he had received any such things from him, the emperor one day, in a third person, asked the doctor what he thought a man that had notoriously betrayed his trust might justly deserve. He answered, it was fit that so notorious a villain should be pounded alive in a mortar. He had no sooner said the word but the emperor gave order that so it should be done to him who had so notoriously cozened the poor pilgrim.[d]

23—25. (23) **Rezon,** a genuine Aramæan name.[a] **Hadadezer,** 2 Sa. viii. 3—12.[b] **Zobah,** 1 Sa. xiv. 47. (24) **and reigned,** *i.e.* he reigned. **Damascus,** Ge. xiv. 15. (25) **abhorred,** revolted fr. it, and vexed it.

Misery of a backslider.—After poor Sabat, an Arabian, who had professed faith in Christ by means of the labours of the Rev. H. Martyn, had apostatised from Christianity, and written in favour of Mohammedanism, he was met at Malacca by the late Rev. Dr. Milne, who proposed to him some very pointed questions, in reply to which, he said, "I am unhappy! I have a mountain of burning sand on my head. When I go about, I know not what I am doing." It is indeed "an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord our God."[c]

26—29 (26) **Jeroboam,**[a] *whose people are many;* a name that sounds prophetic. **Ephrathite,** Ephraimite; 1 Sa. i. 1. **Zereda,** comp. Ju. vii. 22; 1 Ki. vii. 46; 2 Chr. iv. 17. **lifted,** *etc.*, rebelled, raised a sedition. (27) **cause,** or occasion. **built mills,** ch. ix. 15. **breaches,**[b] wh. time had made in the walls. (28) **mighty,** *etc.*, expression not confined to warlike prowess: a man of such skill and activity that he was marked out for promotion. **charge,** forced labour required for his own tribe. (29) **Shilonite,**[c] of Shiloh, ch. xiv. 2—4.

Backsliding.—Terrible is the falling away of any who make profession and act quite contrary to conviction. A lady here (Huddersfield) thus relates her own case:—"Once Mr. —— and I were both in the right way. I drew him into the world again. I am now the most miserable of beings. When I lie down I fear I shall awake in hell. When I go out full dressed, and seem to have all the world can give me, I am ready to sink under the terrors of my own mind. What greatly increases my misery is the remembrance of the dying speech of my own sister, who told me she had stifled convictions and obstinately fought against light to enjoy the company of the world. 'Sister,' said she, 'I die without hope. Beware this be not your case!' 'But, indeed,' said Mrs. ——, 'I fear it will.'"[d]

30—35. (30) **rent it,** acting his message. Comp. ch. xi. 11. (31) **ten pieces,** to represent 10 tribes. Obs. that he only had 9 tribes, and a share of Levi. (32) **one tribe,** *v.* 13. (33)

Ashtoreth, *vv.* 5—7. (34) **the whole,** trans. *ought of the kingdom.*[a] (35) **his son's,** ch. xii. 15.

The kingdom divided.—I. The one new garment represented the one undivided kingdom. II. The twelve pieces represented the twelve tribes. III. The ten represented those who revolted from Rehoboam. Note—God's tender remembrance of David (*v.* 32). Note—The certain punishment of idolatry (*v.* 33).

State of a backslider.—As David cried, How are the mighty overthrown, we may mourn and say, How are the zealous cooled, how are the diligent tired! They which should season others are become like the white of an egg which hath no taste: once they seemed to have fruit, but now they are not hanged with leaves. As God cried unto Adam: "Adam, where art thou?" so they may cry: Zeal, where art thou? Learning, where art thou? Conscience, where art thou? Love, where art thou? They which shined like the sun, when they rose, seem now to be eclipsed of their light. The world hath won the flesh, the flesh hath won the spirit, and Jordan is turned back.[b]

36—40. (36) **light,** 2 Sa. xxi. 17.[a] (37) **soul desireth,** this indicates that ambitions were already working in Jer.'s mind. (38) **if,** the conditions of Div. blessing made with prev. kings are repeated even more forcibly to Jer.[b] (39) **this,** failing to keep covenant. **afflict,** punish: or rather, chastise. (40) **sought to kill,** it appears that Jer. could not wait his time, but attempted rebellion, wh. proved premature. **Shishak,** or *Sheshonk:*[c] his portraiture still exists on the walls of Karnak.[d]

Light in the house.—The houses in the East were, from the remotest antiquity, lighted with lamps; and hence it is so common in Scripture to call everything which enlightens the body or mind, which guides or refreshes, by the name of a lamp. These lamps were sustained by a large candlestick set upon the ground. The houses of Egypt, in modern times, are never without lights; they burn lamps all the night long, and in every occupied apartment. So requisite to the comfort of a family is this custom reckoned, or so imperious is the power which it exercises, that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it. If this custom prevailed in Egypt and the adjacent regions of Arabia and Palestine in former times, it will impart a beauty and force to some passages of Scripture, which have been little observed. Thus, in the language of Jeremiah, to extinguish the light in an apartment is a convertible phrase for total destruction; and if it was the practice in Judæa, as in modern Egypt, which can scarcely be doubted, to keep a lamp continually burning in an occupied apartment, nothing can more properly and emphatically represent the total destruction of a city, than the extinction of the lights.[e]

41—43. (41) **book,** *etc.*, this may be the court history of the reign: it furnished materials, but has not itself survived.[a] (42) **forty years,**[b] comp. reigns of Saul and David. (43) **slept,** *etc.*, the usual formula of a king's death. No hint is *here* given of his repentance. **Rehoboam,** *enlarger of the people.*[c]

Death of backsliders.—I can certainly testify, after sixteen years' ministry, that by far the most hopeless death-beds I have attended have been those of backsliders. I have seen such persons go out of the world without hope, whose conscience

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a "The Heb. will bear either sense, but the context requires this."—*Spk. Com.*

The most important part of your education is that which you now give yourselves.

b H. Smith.

Jeroboam flies to Egypt

a Ps. xviii. 29, cxxxii. 17. "The lighting of the light is a figure of prosperity, as the extinguishing of it is a figure of adversity. Job xviii. 5, 6; Pr. xx. 20."—*Keil.*

b 2 Sa. vii. 11; Ex. xix. 5; De. xv. 4, 5; Zec. iii. 7.

c "About this time a new dynasty had arisen in Eg., with very diff. feelings towards Sol."—*Ewald.*

d Wordsworth.

A hidden light soon becomes dim, and if it be entirely covered up, will expire for want of air. So it is with hidden religion. It must go out. There cannot be a Christian whose light in some aspects does not shine.

e Paxton.

Solomon's death

a 2 Chr. ix. 29.

b "Eighty years, and age at death, ninety-four."—*Josephus.*

c Rechabeam, fr. Heb. *rachab,* in one of its forms, *to make wide,* and *am,* people,

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1 Ki. xiv. 21, 31; 2 Chr. xii. 13.
d J. C. Ryle.

appeared really dead, buried, and gone, and on whom every truth and doctrine and argument appeared alike thrown away. They seemed to have lost the power of feeling, and could only lie still, and despair.[d]

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CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

Rehoboam

1—5. (1) **Shechem,**[a] now *Nablûs:* on flank of Mt. Gerizim; capital of tribe of Ephraim. (2) **in Egypt,** as ch. xi. 40. **heard,** of death of Sol., wh. made him free to return. 2 Chr. x. 2. **called,** informed and invited him. (4) **yoke,** referring to the taxation and forced labour of Sol.'s reign.[b] (5) **three days,** time necessary for consultation.

A national deputation.—I. Who commissioned it? The nation. Hence worthy of respect. II. Who constituted it? Men trusted by the people. Hence should be treated with courtesy. III. What was the work to be done? Crave a mitigation of taxation. Hence the wish of the people to be considered. IV. How was it received? Kindly. The king would not commit himself to a rash and impromptu reply.

Servants honoured for the sender's sake.—As Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, the late Duke of Wellington, always made it a point of receiving and entertaining the judges when they arrived in the county on circuit. He felt that the judges *represented* the sovereign, and no claim of society, no call even of duty, was strong enough to hinder him from paying the same marks of respect which his loyalty would have induced him to pay to the sovereign had she been personally present (*Ill.* Ambassadors).

the deputation

a Jos. xxiv. 1, 32; Ju. ix. 1—23.
b "Their representatives approached the new king with a firm but respectful statement of their grievances,—the enormous exactions of the late king, and the expenditure of the revenues of the kingdom on the royal establishments. 'And made the meat of his table heavy,' LXX. trans."—*Stanley. Bp. Hall, Cont., Rehoboam; Jeroboam.*

6—11. (6) **old men,**[a] senators; men of wide experience. (7) **be a servant,** *i.e.* make prudent concessions: yield a little to their dictation. For once be ruled by the people. The old men wisely estimated the difficulty of the situation. (8) **young men,** his companions. (9) **give ye,** what was to be expected from giddy, inexperienced young men, just excited by seeing their companion on the throne? (10) **my little,** finger is not in Heb. (11) **scorpions,** a kind of whip, knotted scourge.[b]

the advice given

a Pr. xi. 14, xv. 22, xxiv. 6.
b "Whips having leaden balls at the end of their lashes, with hooks projecting from them."—*Gesenius.* "Twisted lashes armed with sharp and lacerating points."—*Kitto.* Poss. the thorny stem of the egg-plant called, fr. the irritating wounds it made, the *scorpion plant.* "The manner of saying or of doing anything goes a great way in the value of the thing itself. It was well said of him that called a good office that was done harshly, and with an ill-will, a stony piece of bread;

The cabinet council.—I. A king seeking advice of his ministers,—this, wise—(*a*) of the old men who had experience, etc.; (*b*) of the young, his boon companions. II. A king following evil advice. Brave words. A suggested despotism. (*a*) What it promised; (*b*) what it realised.

Whips and scorpions.—It is not easy to know which to admire most, the folly or the tyranny of Rehoboam, who in the very commencement of his reign, threatened to lay aside the whips with which his father had chastised the people of Israel, and rule them with scorpions; it was adding insult to cruelty. Nor is the injurious treatment much alleviated, although the idea of some interpreters were admitted, that the scorpion was the name of a kind of whip in use among the Jews, armed with points like the tail of that animal. The sting of the scorpion occasioned an excruciating pain, although death did not ensue. This is attested by John, in the book of Revelation: "And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man." And so intolerable is the agony, that

it is added, "In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." If the Jews used a whip which they called a scorpion, it must have been because it occasioned a similar torment. If these things are properly considered, we shall cease to wonder at the instantaneous revolt of the ten tribes; for it is not easy to conceive an address more calculated to rouse and exasperate the bitter passions of a high-spirited people, than the puerile and wicked speech of Rehoboam.[c]

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it is necessary for him that is hungry to receive it, but it almost chokes a man in the going down."—*Seneca.*

c *Paxton.*

12—15. (12) **third day,** *v.* 5. (13) **roughly,** insultingly, in overbearing tone. (14) **young,** *vv.* 10, 11. (15) **from the Lord,**[a] lit. *it was a turning brought about by the Lord.* The wilful folly of the king and his companions wrought the fulfilment of Div. prophecy.

The adjourned meeting.—I. The king's haughty, harsh, imperious manner. II. The effect produced—(*a*) On the deputies, probably they secretly rejoiced at the occasion thus offered for rebellion; (*b*) On the aged councillors. Their sorrow at the headstrong conduct of the king; (*c*) On the nation. A great war born of a few rash words.

A judge's caution.—Judge Buller, when in the company of a young gentleman of sixteen, cautioned him against being led astray by the example or persuasion of others, and said, "If I had listened to the advice of some of those who called themselves my friends when I was young, instead of being a Judge of the King's Bench, I should have died long ago a prisoner in the King's Bench."

the advice taken

a 2 Chr. xxii. 7, xxv. 20; Acts ii. 23.

"His friends were summon'd, on a point so nice, to pass their judgments and to give advice; but fix'd before, and well resolved was he, as those who ask advice are wont to be."—*Pope.*

16—20. (16) **what portion,** comp. 2 Sa. xx. 1. **see .. David,** plain intimation of intended entire separation. (17) **dwelt,** *etc.*, had taken up residence within the limits of Judah. (18) **Adoram,** the tax-collector.[a] **stoned him,** in a popular tumult. It was intended to be an act of defiance.[b] **made speed,** really fled in fear of his own life. (19) **rebelled,** marg. fell away. (20) **made him king,** by popular election.

The great rebellion.—I. How it arose. From the overruling of providence to punish the idolatry of the people. II. How it was fomented (*a*) by the demand of the deputies, (*b*) by the haughty advice of the young. III. How it ended. Two kings and kingdoms. Weakness in place of strength. Jealousy instead of trust. Rival temples, etc. From this point dates the political decline of the Jewish nation.

The fall of pride.—As we see a child, who, whilst he runs up and down to show his new clothes, stumbles and falls, and, seeing his clothes soiled in the dust, he cries louder at his fall than he crowed at his new coat; so God has put many graces upon thee. Thou crowest at the sight of them, as Nebuchadnezzar did at the sight of his palace; and, like a fool, thou art in admiration of thyself, till thou stumblest over thine own gifts. When thou art down, thou who didst crow like a fool dost cry like a child, because thou seest thy coat of many colours stained and soiled by thy fall.[c]

Intellectual pride.—How often do we find, even in the case of persons who are not vicious in their lives—nay, who perhaps preserve a respectable decorum of conduct—that the heart is prejudiced against a practical admission of divine truth, at least of

the rebellion of Israel

a Comp. 2 Sa. xx. 24; 1 Ki. iv. 6, v. 14.

b "With one exception, this was a bloodless revolution."—*Stanley.*

"Pride is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy. When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy ten more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but it is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it." —*Franklin.*

c *Cawdray.*

"Pride thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of men's society, proud Saul out of his kingdom,

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proud Adam out of paradise, proud Haman out of the court, proud Lucifer out of heaven."—*T. Adams.*

"John Bunyan had a great dread of spiritual pride; and once, after he had preached a very fine sermon, and his friends crowded round to shake him by the hand, while they expressed the utmost admiration of his eloquence, he interrupted them, saying: 'Ay! you need not remind me of that, for the devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit!'"—*Southey.*
d S. C. Wilks.

its more peculiar and mysterious doctrines, on account of the Scriptures not making their appeal to mankind in such a manner as to gratify the pride of the intellect! They find themselves required to believe promptly and implicitly upon the strength of divine declaration; they are enjoined to admit, without hesitation or scruple, many things that they cannot fully understand; and they are invited, yea, commanded, on pain of eternal condemnation, to embrace exactly the same faith which has been professed by thousands of the most illiterate of mankind—in common, it is true, with men of the highest order of thought and the most extensive range of literature—but still a faith which owns no submission to human intellect, and refuses to bow its lofty claims before the tribunal of any created mind, however wide its grasp or exalted its powers. A mind vain of its intellectual superiority, and unsubdued by the grace of God, will not be easily persuaded to submit to this: it will recoil from such an unreserved self-dedication; it will demand something more conciliating to the pride of the human heart; and will venture peremptorily to put down as false whatever cannot be inferred by the productions of uninspired reason, or at least which, when revealed, cannot be fathomed and fortified by human philosophy.[d]

Rehoboam is restrained from war

vv. 21—24. *F. D. Maurice, Prophets and Kings*, 87; *N. Alexander, Hist. Eccles.* iii. 328.
a 2 Chr. xiii. 4—12.

"Time's gradual touch has moulder'd into beauty many a tower, which, when it frown'd with all its battlements, was only terrible."—*Mason.*
"Forgiveness to the injured does belong; but they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong."—*Dryden.*
d S. C. Wilks.

21—24. (21) **Benjamin,** not mentioned in the matter before; this tribe having claims to the throne would feel set aside as much by Ephraim as by Judah. Jerus. too was on the border-line of the two tribes. (22) **Shemaiah,** 2 Chr. xi. 2, xii. 5—8. **man of God,** De. xxxiii. 1; frequently used in Bk. of Kings. (23) **remnant,** those mentioned, *v.* 17. (24) **from me,**[a] a Div. providence as a Div. punishment.

African rite of brotherhood.—Capt. Burton, in his work on Africa, tells us the following singular and beautiful rite which he found among the people. Two persons wish to take upon themselves what they call "The Brother Rite." To do this, they sit down face to face, with their legs crossed, holding in their laps their implements of war. A sheep or goat is then killed, and its heart roasted and brought to them, and a half given to each. One of them then takes a knife, and opens a vein on the left breast of the other, over the heart; and, as the blood flows, he smears his piece of heart in the blood and eats it; the other doing in the same manner with him. Next, each catches some of the blood of the other, and rubs it into his own wound; and the rite is now complete. This rite is designed to signify that henceforth they are halves or parts of each other. Each, through his own blood thus eaten, and thus absorbed by the other's veins, is considered as living in and of the other. Henceforth, should either be in any trouble, the other is to feel "It is myself that is in trouble," and thus do for the other whatsoever in like circumstances he would do for himself.[d]

Jeroboam's golden calves

a Ju. ix. 49.

b "It was like a key to the great caravan road which led over Gilead

25—29. (25) **built,** prob. fortified and beautified: restored it,[a] apparently with idea of making it his capital. **Penuel,**[b] Ge. xxxii. 30. (26) **in his heart,** or these were his thoughts. 1 Sa. xxvii. 1. (27) **go up,** as bound to do three times each year. The feasts had been appointed partly to preserve the national unity. (28) **took counsel,** of his leading supporters. **calves,** figures that he had seen while in Egypt.[c] **thy gods,**

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Ex. xxxii. 4. (29) Bethel, in the S. Ge. xii. 8. **Dan,** in the N. Jos. xix. 47.

Idols.—The missionaries among the Gentoos are obliged to use various methods to attract their attention to Divine things. One day, a missionary took with him a little boy from the school to a shady place, where many people were passing, and set him to read aloud; when some began to listen, he conversed with the boy about what he was reading. The subject was, the absurdity of idolatry; and a Brahmin in the crowd said, "My little fellow, why do you speak so lightly of the gods of your fathers?" The boy replied, in a loud voice, "Speak lightly of them! Why, they have eyes, and see not; they have mouths, and speak not; they have ears, and hear not; they are vanity and a lie; and why not speak lightly of them?" The Brahmin walked away confounded.

30—33. (30) **became,** not absolutely intended to set up a new religion, but to this it inevitably led. (31) **house of high places,** a temple. It is called *house, etc.*, in contempt. **lowest,** *etc.*,[a] fr. people indiscriminately, not exclusively fr. tribe of Levi.[b] (32) **feast,** as substitute for the feasts held at Jerus. Prob. imitation of feast of tabern., but set a month later. **He offered,** assuming rights of priest. (33) **he offered,** obs. the repetition.[c]

Idols.—One morning a little girl came, as usual, into her parent's room, to kneel down at her mother's knee, and repeat her prayers. Before she could do so, her father held up the picture of a Hindoo god, and said, "See, Mary, what a *god* the poor heathen pray to!" It was very ugly, and looked very ill-natured. She gave it but one look, which said, "What an ugly god!" and immediately dropped on her knees at her mother's side, and began saying in a sweet voice, "Our Father, which art in heaven," etc. Her parents wept for joy, because she evidently thought God *lovely*. She has been a missionary collector ever since, and now works for the Chinese schools.

to Damascus, and also of the road by Tadmor (Palmyra) to the Euphrates and Mesopotamia."—*Wordsworth.*

c "The sacred calf of Heliopolis."—*Stanley.*

"It is suggested that they were imitations of the 2 cherubim that guarded the ark."—*Spk. Com.*

Jeroboam establishes idolatry

a Heb. *fr. the ends of the people*, meaning from all ranks.

b Nu. iii. 6, 10; 2 Ki. xvii. 32; Eze. xliv. 7, 8.

c 2 Chr. xxvi. 16. "Jeroboam was evidently a shrewd and clear-sighted worldly politician."—*Porter.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **man of God,** named *Sadon* by Josephus; poss. *Iddo.*[a] **by the altar,** on the ascending platform. (2) **Josiah,** 2 Ki. xxiii. 17. **men's bones,**[b] wh. would be defilement and disgrace for it. (3) **sign,** a remarkable event connected with the prophet's word, wh. would confirm his further message. (4) **put forth,** stretch it out as if to seize the prophet. **dried up,** shrivelled. (5) **rent,** cracked so that the ashes fell through.

Jeroboam's idolatry reproved (*v.* 4).—Notice—I. Jeroboam's unbelieving expedient. Scarcely was he raised to the throne, before he established idolatry throughout his dominions. To this he was instigated by unbelief. II. His vindictive wrath. The sending of the prophet from Judah, instead of humbling, rather incensed him. III. His exemplary punishment. Forced to ask for the prayers of him whom he had just before endeavoured to destroy.[c]

Profanation of the altar.—These words were uttered in consequence of the profanation of the altar, and the wickedness of those concerned. Has a man brought or purchased a kid for

Jeroboam's hand is withered

a 2 Chr. xiii. 22.

b Nu. xix. 16; 2 Ki. xxiii. 16.

Bp. Hall, The Seduced Prophet. Contemp.

v. 1. *W. Reading*, ii. 388; *R. Norris*, 107; *Bp. Maltby*, 255; *C. I. Furlong*, 97.

v. 2. *J. H. Newman, Par. Ser.* iii. 65.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 2, 3. *T. Plump*

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re, Pop. Com. i. 482.

d Roberts.

the withered hand restored

a Nu. xxii. 18; 1 Sa. ix. 7, 8; 1 Ki. xiv. 3; 2 Ki. v. 5, viii. 8, 9.

v. 6. *W. C. Wilson*, ii. 108; *Bp. Heber*, ii. 134.

vv. 8, 9. *R. Warner, Ch. of Eng. Prin.* iii. 14.

vv. 8—10. *H. Gurney*, 155.

"Nemesis is one of God's handmaids."—*Algar.*

b Roberts.

the old prophet of Bethel

a "The invit. of the proph. could only spring either fr. the intention to tempt him, that is, to bring him to ruin, and to take fr. his prediction its effect on king and people; or the desire to refresh himself by intercourse with him, and derive profit fr. his prophetical gift for his own spiritual life."—*Keil.*

v. 14, *S. J. Bossuet*, xiv. 184.

"The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat oneself. All sin is easy after that." *Bailey.*

b Percy Anec.

the true prophet is deceived

sacrifice to his deity, and should it have been stolen, he goes to his god to tell his story, and then says, "O Swamy! may the bones and the body of him who stole the kid intended for you, be offered up to you as a sacrifice." Whoever walks upon the place where men's bones have been burnt, becomes impure.[d]

6—10. (6) **thy God,** whom in his distress he is willing to acknowledge. (7) **refresh,** with bath and food, things needed after a journey. **reward,** such were usually given to prophets, as Balaam.[a] (8) **half thine house,** Nu. xxii. 18. (9) **charged me,** it is plain that he had no doubt whatever concerning his duty in this. (10) **another way,** a further test of his obedience. He that calls another to duty should himself be faithful.

Restoration of the hand.—This is said in reference to the hand of Jeroboam, which had become stiff in consequence of the violence he had offered to the prophet. The face of the Lord was to be entreated. Has a man injured another, he says, "Ah, my lord, forgive me for the sake of the face of your son." Or, does he wish another to intercede for him, he says, "Ah! go, and beseech his face for me." A man whose name was *Veatha-Veyāthar*, was once asked by some prophet, "Who is the greatest god, Siva or Vishnoo?" The man then stretched forth his hand towards a temple of Vishnoo, and said, "He is the greatest." Immediately his arm became stiff and withered. The prophet, seeing this, then prayed to Siva, and his hand was restored.[b]

11—15. (11) **old prophet,** name unknown. He was evidently acting fr. bad motives in thus interfering with his fellow-prophet.[a] (12) **what way,** showing he had some scheme in relation to him. (13) **ass,** prob. too old to walk far, and wanted to overtake the traveller. (14) **oak terebinth,** the man was loitering, no doubt very tired. (15) **me,** thy fellow-prophet.

A false prophet.—At the time of the noted imposture of the "Holy Maid of Kent," who pretended that God had revealed that in case Henry VIII. should divorce Queen Catharine of Arragon, and take another wife during her life, his royalty would not be of a month's duration, but he should die the death of a villain; one Peto, who appears to have been an accomplice in the imposture, was preaching before Henry, at Greenwich, and in the same strain with the nun, did not scruple to tell his majesty to his face that he had been deceived by many lying prophets, while himself, as a true Micaiah, warned him that the dogs should lick his blood as they had licked the blood of Ahab. Henry bore this outrageous insult with a moderation not very usual to him; but to undeceive the people he appointed Dr. Curwin to preach before him on the Sunday following, who justified the king's proceedings, and branded Peto with the epithets of "rebel, slanderer, dog and traitor." Curwin, however, was interrupted by a friar, who called him "a lying prophet, who sought to alter the succession of the crown," and proceeded so virulently to abuse him that the king was obliged to interpose, and command him to be silent. Peto and the friar were afterwards summoned before the king and council, but were only reprimanded for their insolence.[b]

16—19. (16) **may not,** evidently *duty* was contending with *inclination.* I may not but I should like to. (17) **said to me,** so he had a clear knowledge of his duty. (18) **he lied,**[a] surely

he could have done so only to curry favour with the king. (19) **went back,** inclination getting its sway by help of this new supposed prophetic message.

The disobedient prophet (*v.* 18).—This history may teach us—I. That whenever God has plainly declared His will, no grounds of supposed expediency, and no less fully authenticated declarations, however they may profess to proceed from Him, should ever induce us to depart from it. II. That we cannot judge of a man's eternal state from the way in which he may be taken out of this world. III. That we should not be induced heedlessly to follow any guide, whatever may be his pretensions, or whatever his apparent sanctity. IV. That no command of God is to be lightly regarded, and that the nearer people are to God the more certainly will their transgressions be punished.[b]

Satan's devices.—The wild hyena, which shows great cunning in tracking its prey, and deceiving the shepherd and his dogs, is just as simple and stupid when required to protect itself. It lies silent and motionless when the hunter approaches its hole, imagines that it is not seen, and allows him to fasten a cord to its foot. This he does with great gentleness, but has no sooner bound it to a tree than he loudly summons his comrades to the spot, and in spite of its rage, and all its attempts to escape, they soon put it to death. The devil plays the part of this hunter to the ungodly. He always pipes to them in soft accents, "Great is the Divine mercy; there is no danger; all will be forgiven." No sooner, however, has he bound them with his cords, and received the signal from God, than he changes his tone: "Thou cursed fellow," he cries, "thou despiser of the Most High, woe be to thy soul! Thou hast served me well, and shall not want thy wages!" So, too, the selfish and fraudulent innkeeper speaks his guests fair, draws and serves his liquor fresh, places dice and cards upon the table, invites the company to amuse themselves, and meanwhile says nothing of the reckoning. But that is not forgotten; and when at last laid before them, it makes them stare. The devil does the same. The worst dogs are not those that bark and then bite, but those that bite before they bark.[c]

20—22. (20) **came,** really he had this intimation from God.[a] (21) **he cried,** indic. a peculiar prophetic tone; or his deep feeling for his brother whom he had tempted to sin. (22) **camest back,** this act of disobedience, if known by Jer. would harden him in his idea that this had not been a true prophet. **sepulchre,** *etc.*, this was one of the earnest desires of the Hebrews.[b]

Disobedient prophet.—It has been asked, How did the prophet from Judah sin? or, at any rate, how did he sin so grievously as to deserve the punishment of death? Was he not justified in believing that God might revoke His command? Would it not have been wrong in him to suspect the "old prophet" of telling a lie? To such inquiries it may be replied, with God is no variableness neither shadow of turning. He cannot revoke a command until the circumstances under which the command was given are materially changed. The circumstances here were not changed. Again, if God gives a command and revokes it, He will revoke it as plainly and with as much evidence as he gave it. Here there was neither the same plainness nor as strong evidence. In fact, the "old prophet" did not say that the com-

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a Je. xxiii. 16, 17, 32; Eze. xiii. 6, 7.

v. 18. *Dr. J. White, Bamp. Lec.* 251.

v. 19. *W. Nind,* i. 295

b T. Grantham, B.D.

"Poverty and wealth have different temptations, but they are equally strong. The rich are tempted to pride and insolence; the poor to jealousy and envy. The envious and discontented poor invariably become haughty and overbearing when rich; for selfishness is equally at the bottom of these opposite evils. Indeed, it is at the bottom of all manner of evils."—*Mrs. Child.*

"Life is the art of being well deceived."—*Hazlitt.*

c Gotthold.

he is reproved for his disobedience

a "God caught him in his own snare; he made him the instrument of declaring the prophet's sin and God's righteousness: He put a word into his mouth, wh. He constrained Him to utter."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ge. xlvii. 30, xlix. 29, l. 25; 2 Sa. xix. 37.

vv. 20—22. *Dr. G. Benson,* 101;

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J. H. Pott, ii. 194; *G. Moberly*, 207.

vv. 20—24. *B. E. Nicholls*, 107.

v. 21. *J. Venn*, i. 276.

vv. 21, 22. *Bp. Copplestone, Remains* 272; *Dr. G. D'Oyly*, ii. 327; *J. G. Dowling*, 439; *J. Puckle*, i. 181.

"O what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive."—*Scott.*

Are you in heaviness through manifold temptation,—"look to Jesus"—"He was tempted in all points like as we are," and he will make a way for your escape.

c Spk. Com.

he is killed by a lion

a 2 Ki. ii. 24. Eze. ix. 6; 1 Ps. iv. 17, 18.

b See *Keble's Ch. Year.* Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

vv. 23—26. *C. E. Kennaway, Ss. to Young*, 212.

v. 24. *Dr. J. Lightfoot, Wks.* vii. 167; *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* v. 340.

v. 26. *Dr. J. Eveleigh, Ss.* ii. 387; *W. Marriott*, 302; *H. Blunt*, 75; *W. Blunt*, 75; *W. Dealtry*, 241; *Dr. T. Arnold*, 101; *J. S. M. Anderson* 101; *C. E. Kennaway*, 118; *F. French*, 115.

c W. A. Griffiths.

and buried in a cave

d 1 Ki. xiii. 1—6.

mand was revoked; he only said that an angel had told him to bring the man of God back, which could mean no other than this, that an angel had bid him try to bring the man of God back. The conclusion that the command was revoked could only be obtained by way of deduction from the statement of the old prophet. It was not contained directly in it; and the evidence to the man of God was, in the one case, the mere word of a man, and of a man who, by his lingering at Bethel, yet not rebuking Jeroboam, was clearly not a very good man; while in the other case the evidence had been the direct word of God. It was not the duty of the "man of God" to disbelieve the old prophet; but it was his duty not to have suffered himself to be persuaded. He should have felt that his obedience was being tried, and should have required, ere he considered himself released, the same or as strong evidence as that on which he had received the obligation. With respect to the question whether the sin was such a heinous one as to deserve death, we may answer, first, that the sin, disobedience to certain positive commands of God, was one which it was at this time very important to punish signally, since it was exactly the sin of Jeroboam and his adherents; and, secondly, that temporal death is not among God's heaviest punishments, that it comes on men both naturally and miraculously for light offences, as for rashness, carelessness, childish insolence (see 2 Kings ii. 24), etc., and that in such cases we may regard it as sent in view of future punishment, and therefore as in some sort a mercy. We are not to suppose that the "man of Judah" perished eternally because he perished temporally.[c]

23—27. (23) **the ass,** evidently a second one, *see v.* 27. **brought back,** *see vv.* 13—19. (24) **a lion,** from the wood near Bethel.[a] **carcase,** word first used Le. v. 2. The singular features of this event indicate a Divine miracle. The lion slays but does not eat. The ass remains, and is untouched. The lion even watches beside his victim. (25) **men passed,** yet were unmolested. (26) **disobedient,**[b] he does not add, as he should have done, 'thro' my seductions.' **torn,** marg. *broken.* (27) **the ass,** prob. one mentioned *v.* 13.

The prophet and the lion (*vv.* 23, 24).—I. The success of the prophet. 1. He appeared unexpectedly; 2. His stern honesty. He did not shrink from his duties; 3. His forgiving temper. He prayed for the apostate king. II. His transgression. 1. Indicision of character; 2. Note that temptation is stronger when it comes in the disguise of friendship. III. His judicial death. 1. Disobedience is a great sin; 2. When once a man steps out of the path of duty he is out of the path of safety; 3. God shows mercy in judgment; 4. God's method is to punish His children on earth rather than punish them for ever in hell.[c]

Profession and practice of obedience.—Pharnaces sent a crown to Cæsar; at the same time he rebelled against him. But Cæsar returned the crown and this message back, "Let him return to his obedience first, and then I will accept the crown by way of recognisance." Thus God will not be crowned with our bare profession, except we crown that with a suitable conversation.

28—34. (28) **found,** *etc.*, as *vv.* 24, 25. These peculiar circumstances caused the matter to be generally talked about; and so news of the prophet's message to Jeroboam was widely spread.[d]

(29) **upon the ass,** the one waiting beside it. (30) **his own grave,** families often possessed their own tombs, hewn in the rocks.[b] There seems also to have been a column erected near the entrance.[c] (31) **beside his bones,**[d] *i.e.* in the next cell, or shelf. (32) **saying,**[d] *etc.* ch. xiii. 1—6. (33) **lowest,** *etc.*, *see* ch. xii. 31. **consecrated,** *lit.* filled his hand. (34) **sin,** here meaning cause of suffering and desolation.

The moral murderer at the tomb of his victim (*v.* 30).—1. The prophet's mission; 2. His sin and death; 3. The principle found here is the power of influence. Here is—I. A sad ruin; (1) Of a good man; (2) Of a promising man; (3) By an apparently insignificant act. II. A self-caused ruin. (1) It deeply related to himself; (2) The result, not of accident, but of conscious plan; (3) The ruin of a brother. III. An unalterable ruin. No repentance could—(1) Undo the act; (2) Or alter its consequences. All that many can say is "Alas." How many parents, etc., can stand at graves in England, and only say "Alas!"[f]

Choosing a place of interment (*v.* 31).—His object in making this request was no doubt a selfish one; he believed the deceased was a good man, and felt a hope that if his body were to rest near him it would be protected from insult, and that with him he would share the blessings of the resurrection. Wherever the body or the bones of Hindoo or Mohammedan saints are buried, there will others also wish to be interred. Often, when men think themselves near death, they say, "Take care that you bury me near the holy man. Ah! remember you are to put me near to the sacred place." The idea seems to be, that the spot being thus sanctified, neither devils nor evil spirits can injure them. Numbers are carried to a great distance to be thus interred.[g]

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b Comp. Mat. xxvii. 60.

c 2 Ki. xxiii. 17.

d "He may have had some superstitious hope of being benefited at the resurrection by being in the same grave with a man of God."—*Jamieson.* *e* He may also have feared the rifling of the sepulchres when the prophecy was fulfilled. 2 Ki. xxiii. 18.

v. 30. *J. Cawood,* i. 136.

vv. 31, 32. *J. Purkle,* i. 195.

v. 33. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 502.

vv. 33, 34. *Dr. R. South,* i. 134.

f S. B. Rees.

g Roberts.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

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1—4. (1) **Abijah,** *Jehovah is my father;* or *my desire.* The name indic. that Jer. had not wholly forsaken Jehovah. (2) **disguise thyself,**[a] *lit.* change thyself. If she went as the queen Jer. felt sure of unfavourable answer. **Shiloh,** Jos. xviii. 1.[b] **Ahijah** ch. xi. 29. (3) **loaves,** *etc.*,[c] these were such a present as a poor woman might bring. **cracknels,** cakes. Heb. *nikkudim,* cakes marked with points;[d] or kind of sweet seed-cake. (4) **were set,** comp. 1 Sa. iv. 15.[e]

The worldly man in the time of trouble.—I. Jeroboam's trouble. (*a*) Note his character—idolatrous, superstitious; (*b*) The illness of his son; (*c*) His great anxiety. II. Jeroboam's policy. (1) Will obtain the aid of the prophet. Why? (2) Wishes for his unbiassed opinion: hence sends one in disguise; (3) He obtains a true answer, though the character of the messenger is known to the prophet. A type of the man who in prosperity rejects religion, but who in trouble seeks its consolation, yet whose pride prevents his right seeking in the way of true repentance.

Respect and disrespect (*v.* 9).—Various methods of expressing respect and reverence have been practised, and, as may reasonably be supposed, some apparently opposite to each other have prevailed among different nations. In many instances to turn the back upon an equal or superior has been intended to indicate the

sickness of Abijah

a "By her guise she is of the peasantry, and she bears a basket. Yet her gait scarcely befits her garb."—*Kitto.*

b Jos. xviii. 8—10, xix. 51, xxi. 2, xxii. 12; Ju. xviii. 31, xxi. 12, 19, 21.

c 1 Ki. xiii. 7; 2 Ki viii 8, 9.

d Fr. Heb. *nakad,* to prick.

e Ge. xxvii. 1—29. See *Bishop Hall's Cont.*

v. 1. *Dr. J. Collinge's Providence,* 531.

"The most important thing in

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this world, next to the soul's salvation, is the taking care of children; and yet there is no subject on which there is so much ignorance as on this."—*Beecher.*

f Asiatic Journal.

Ahijah the prophet is forewarned

a Ps. cxxxix. 1—6; Pr. xxi. 30; Lu. xii. 2; He. iv. 13.

b Comp. 1 Sa. xv. 26—28.

c 1 Ki. xi. 29—31.

d Ne. ix. 26; Ps. l. 17; Eze. xxiii. 35.

"A babe is a mother's anchor. She cannot swing far from her moorings. Her thoughts follow the imagined future of her child. That babe is the boldest of pilots, and guides her fearless thoughts down through scenes of coming years. The old ark never made such voyages as the cradle daily makes."—*Beecher.*

e Roberts.

and told the doom of Jeroboam

a "I will sweep out after the house of Jeroboam, as one sweepeth out dirt, till it is gone."—*Keil.*

b "Troops of dogs, more than half wild, sleep by day, and scour the streets by night, clearing away all the offal and carrion they can find."—*Spk. Com.*

utmost contempt and indignation. So it is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, 1 Sam. x. 9; Neh. ix. 26; Psa. xxi. 12; Jer. ii. 27, xxxii. 33, xlviii. 39; Ezek. xxiii. 35. But we find a remarkable case, in which it is actually reversed, and the back is turned towards the king, from the profound veneration which the people wish to manifest. "The passage of the viceroy took place the next morning with great pomp; he crossed the river upon four boats lashed together, and rowed by two war-boats. The troops lined the road where he landed, sitting with their backs towards him as a mark of very great respect. Presents of rice, fish, and betel-nuts were made to him."*f*

5—9. (5) **for her son,** concerning the fate of her son. **feign,** *etc.*, this the prophet's blindness would prevent him from detecting. (6) **come in,** *etc.*, addressing her first, and at once showing the uselessness of the disguise.*a* **heavy,** lit. *hard:* "with injunction to be hard on you." (7) **Lord God,** declaring those Div. rights which Jer. refused to acknowledge.*b* (8) **rent,** as in Ahijah's former prophecy.*c* (9) **above all,** *etc.*, bec. Jer. had drawn the people away to unauthorised and idolatrous worship. **cast . . back,** indic. the insolent wickedness of his attempts.*d*

Divine compensations (*v.* 5).—I. In the history before us we have a blind prophet placed at a disadvantage by his physical disability. But for blindness he might have had knowledge of his visitor. II. We find that God does not permit him to be at a disadvantage by reason of his infirmity. III. It may remind us of Divine help for the aged and infirm. The outer man decayeth, but the inner man filled with light.

Addressing by name (*v.* 6).—This woman disguised herself in order to deceive the prophet, and therefore he addressed her by name, to show that she was known to him. Married women are generally spoken to as the wife of such a person. Supposing a married female to be in a crowd, and a man on the outside wishes to speak to her, he will say, "Come hither, wife of Chinne Tamby;" literally, Chinne Tamby's wife, hither come. "O! Muttoo's wife, where are you?" Should a person have to speak to a female who is walking before him, he will not call her by name, but address her, "Such a one's wife, I wish to speak to you."*e*

10—13. (10) **cut off,** *etc.*, this done by Baasha, ch. xv. 28, 29. **shut . . Israel,** *see* De. xxxii. 36. **take . . remnant,** *i.e.* wholly clear away the family.*a* (11) **dogs eat,** these prowl about among the refuse of Eastern streets.*b* **fowls,** birds of prey, esp. the vulture. (12) **the child,** prob. a young man; affectionately called here a child. (13) **some good thing,** born before Jer. turned aside to idols, he kept faithful to God, so was graciously removed from the evil to come.

Abijah's piety rewarded (*v.* 13).—Notice—I. Abijah's commendation. Consider it—1. As it was in itself; 2. As existing under his peculiar circumstances. He was a young man, a youth of high distinction. II. His reward. This serves to show—1. That God loveth piety wherever He beholds it; 2. That He will reward it wherever it is found in the lowest degree.*c*

Shut up (*v.* 10).—Sometimes, when a successful prince has endeavoured to extirpate the preceding royal family, some of

them have escaped the slaughter, and secured themselves in a fortress or place of secrecy, while others have sought an asylum in foreign countries, from whence they have occasioned great anxiety to the usurper. The word shut up, strictly speaking, refers to the first of these cases; as in the preservation of Joash from Athaliah in a private apartment of the temple. Such appears also to have been the case in more modern times. "Though more than thirty years had elapsed since the death of the Sultan Achmet, father of the new emperor, he had not, in that interval, acquired any great information or improvement. Shut up during this long interval in the apartment assigned him, with some eunuchs to wait on him, the equality of his age with that of the princes who had a right to precede him, allowed him but little hope of reigning in his turn; and he had, besides, well-grounded reasons for a more serious uneasiness."[d] But when David was in danger, he kept himself close in Ziklag, but not so as to prevent him from making frequent excursions. In latter times, in the East, persons of royal descent have been left, when the rest of a family have been cut off, if no danger was apprehended from them, on account of some mental or bodily disqualification. Blindness saved the life of Mohammed Khodabendeh, a Persian prince of the sixteenth century, when his brother Ismael put all the rest of his brethren to death.[e]

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1 Ki. xvi. 4, xxi. 24; Je. xv. 3; Re. xix. 17, 18.

vv. 12, 13. *S. C. Wilks*, 12.

v. 13. *C. Love, Wks.* ii. 391; *T. Brooks, Apples of Gold*, etc.; *Dr. J. Evans*, 95; *J. Jenkins*, ii. 178.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Baron de Tott.

e Harmer.

A white garment appears worse with slight soiling than do coloured garments much soiled; so a little fault in a good man attracts more attention than grave offences in bad men.

14—16. (14) **that . . now**, the king would destroy the house of Jer. when he was raised to the throne, but prophet sees the beginning of the punishment *now* in this death of the firstborn.[a] (15) **reed**, wh. is moved with every wind; prophecy of national commotions. **root up**, allusion to the great captivity.[b] **the river**, the Euphrates.[c] **groves**, for idol-worship. (16) **give . . up**, letting it be no longer His special people.

and the punishment of Israel

a "The doom of Jer.'s house will surely arrive; nay, it has already begun to be executed, not only in the death of his son, but by the appointment of a king in his place." — *Wordsworth.*

b De. xxviii. 63, 64, xxix. 27; Jos. xxiii. 15, 16.

c 2 Ki. xv. 29, xvii. 6, 23, xviii. 11.

v. 16. *Rt. Hon. E. Weston*, 191; *Dr. R. Gordon*, 44.

We in this world are surely not planted in the wilderness, in a territory unclaimed by the Lord Paramount. Nor is the Proprietor of this vineyard a careless landlord. He is jealous of His rights. He comes often, and with a piercing scrutiny which nothing

The shaken reed (*v.* 15).—I. Picture the reed—a type of Israel—in the water, the source of its life. II. The water itself, the source of its nourishment, the instrument of its disturbance. III. When thus shaken it is rooted up.

Retribution.—In the reign of Henry VII., Dr. Whittington, a bishop's chancellor, having condemned a pious woman to the flames at Chipping Sodbury, went to that town to witness the courageous manner in which she set her seal to the truth of the Gospel. On his return from that affecting scene, a furious bull passed through the crowd, gored the chancellor, and suddenly inflicted death in a most awful manner. No other person in the crowd suffered any injury.—*Retribution.*—I landed at a village of rude huts on the shore of the river, and sat down on a stone, waiting for my donkey, which I purposed to ride through the desert in the cool of the evening to Assouan, where my boat was moored. While I was sitting there two boys were playing and wrestling together; they were naked, and about nine or ten years old. They soon began to quarrel, and one of them drew the dagger which he wore upon his arm, and stabbed the other in the throat. The poor boy fell to the ground bleeding; the dagger had entered his throat on the left side, under the jawbone, and being directed upwards had cut his tongue and grazed the roof of his mouth. Whilst he cried and writhed about upon the ground, with the blood pouring out of his mouth, the villagers came out from their cabins and stood around talking and screaming, but affording no help to the poor boy. Presently a young

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can clude. Leaves are not enough; nor are blossoms enough: fruit is wanted. What right have trees, what right have men, to fail of the end or which they were made? Why should not one as much as the other fall before the axe? Fearful doom,—from the vineyard to the fire!

"Nature holds an immense uncollected debt over every man's head."—*Beecher.*

[d] *Hon. R. Curzon.*

man stood up and asked where the father of the boy was, and why he did not come to help him. The villagers said he had no father. "Where are his relations, then?" he asked. The boy had no relations; there was no one to care for him in the village. On hearing this he uttered some words which I did not understand, and started off after the boy who had inflicted the wound. The young assassin ran away as fast as he could, and a famous chase took place. They darted over the plain, scrambled up the rocks, and jumped down some dangerous-looking places among the masses of granite which formed the background of the village. At length the boy was caught, and, screaming and struggling, was dragged to the spot where his victim lay moaning and heaving upon the sand. The young man now placed him between his legs, and in this way held him tight whilst he examined the wound of the other, putting his finger into it, and opening his mouth to see exactly how far it extended. When he had satisfied himself on the subject he called for a knife; the boy had thrown his away in the race, and he had not one himself. The villagers stood silent around, and one of them having handed him a dagger, the young man held the boy's head sideways across his thigh, and cut his throat exactly in the same way as he had done to the other. He then pitched him away upon the ground, and the two lay together, bleeding and writhing, side by side. Their wounds were precisely the same: the second operation had been most expertly performed, and the knife had passed just where the boy had stabbed his playmate. The wounds, I believe, were not dangerous, for presently both the boys got up and were led away to their homes. It was a curious instance of retributive justice, following out the old law of blood for blood, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.[d]

death of Abijah and Jeroboam

17—20. (17) **Tirzah,** the site is uncertain.[a] Jos. xii. 24. (18) **buried him,** in state, as the king's son, and the heir. (19) **warred,** chiefly with the kings of Israel. **chronicles,** lit. *words of days:* public records of events of the reigns, subsequently collected and edited. (20) **days,** better, *years.*

[a] "*Taluza,* 6 m. N. of Nablous."—*Robinson.*

Song Sol. vi. 4; 1 Ki. xvi. 23, 24.

The child died (*v.* 17).—I. May be said of multitudes, of the majority of those who are born into the world. II. The child died notwithstanding the hopes of parents and people that centred in it. III. The child died in this case because of the judgment of God. IV. Any child here may die; therefore let teachers, parents, children, consider the soul's welfare.

v. 17. *T. Gataker,* ii. 291.

The death of a child (*v.* 17).—Hannah was the oldest of seven children; she had lived in this land of instruction to the age of sixteen, without having been taught either working or reading. Some ladies, pitying her neglected condition, undertook to teach her. She was modest, diligent, and attentive; but her mind had been uncultivated so long, that her progress was slow and laborious. Her want of success did not discourage her; still she persevered; but she had hardly learned to know all the letters, and repeat some hymns, when she was seized with an illness, which proved a rapid decline. When I last saw her, says a friend, she was lying in a miserable little bed under the window; her cough and the pain in her side would hardly allow her to reply to my inquiries after her health. Seeing she could not continue long, I asked her if she thought she could recover; she said with great earnestness, "Oh, I must; I can't die yet."

"Poor George Somers had known what it was to be in sickness, and none to soothe—lonely and in prison, and none to visit him. He could not endure his mother from his sight; if she moved away, his eye would follow her. She would sit for hours by his bed, watching him as he slept. Sometimes he would start from a feverish dream, and look anxiously up until he saw her bending over him, when he would take her

"Why cannot you die yet, Hannah? Are you afraid to die?" "Oh, I am not fit; I must not die yet—I must not die yet—I can't die yet!" Knowing how few were her opportunities of religious instruction, I spoke to her of Jesus, who died for sinners, who was willing to receive all who came to Him, however ignorant or wretched. I told her—though she knew nothing, could do nothing for herself—Jesus was able and willing to do all for her.

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hand, lay it on his bosom, and fall asleep with the tranquillity of a child. In this way he died." —*W. Irving*

21—24. (21) **forty and one years,** he was therefore born one year before the accession of Solomon. **mother's name,** that she was a foreigner is stated partly to account for Rehoboam's wilfulness and idolatry.[a] (22) **jealousy,** comp. Ex. xx. 5, xxxiv. 14, 15. (23) **images,** prob. *pillars.*[b] **groves,** Heb. *asherim*, as it is said these groves were *built*, they were probably circles made of wood columns. (24) **sodomites,**[c] utterly licentious.

Rehoboam.—I. Came to the throne at a mature age. Of age sufficient to understand the secret of his father's weakness and the nation's decline. II. A man of mature age unbenefited by observation and experience. III. A man of mature age submitting to the guidance of thoughtless men. IV. The son of an Ammonitess. Maternal influence seems to be suggested here, and may account in part for his character and the disasters of his reign. It is a significant fact that this circumstance is again stated in *v.* 31.

Idols may be of use.—When the English army had taken the city of Rangoon, the capital of Burmah, Havelock, who was then a lieutenant, sought out, as was his custom, a place for a prayer meeting. He secured a chamber in the temple, devoted to Boodh, with idols, sitting all around, their legs crossed and arms folded upon their laps. He caused a lamp to be put in the hands of each idol, to illumine the place, while he and his company read the Scriptures and prayed together. All idols, whether in heathendom or Christendom, would be in their proper place, if they were only used as creatures to hold light to guide us to the true God and Saviour.[d]

Judah

Rehoboam

a "The queen mother had usually great influence with the kings of Judah."—*Wordsworth.*

2 Chr. xxii. 3.

b Stone columns, or statues.

c "Devoted or consecrated to the mother of the gods, the famous *dea* Syra, who was served with abominable rites."—*Spk.Com.*

vv. 21—24. *P. Butini, Contre l'Idolatrie*, ii. 1.

d J. Bate.

25—31. (25) **Shishak,**[a] Sheshonk I., first of dynasty, XXI. of the Tanite-Bubastites. His accession is fixed to year 978 B.C., and he is supposed to have reigned twenty-one years. (26) **treasures,** gathered by Solomon. **shields,** ch. x. 17, this indic. that Shishak was paid to retire. (27) **brazen,** he was anxious not to appear degraded by their absence. (28) **bare them,** in the customary procession. (29) **chronicles,**[b] comp. *v.* 19. (30) **war,** as *v.* 19. (31) **mother's name,** repeated as if some significance attached to her.

Brass for gold (*v.* 27).—I. The brazen were about as good as the golden shields. Solomon's shields the glittering emblems of his pride; Rehoboam's of his vanity. II. The exchange may be regarded as emblematical—1. Of national decline: from the real to the showy; 2. Of a church's decline from the power to the form; 3. Of individual decline from the fine gold of true piety to the sounding brass of a hollow and worthless profession.

A model mother (*v.* 31).—Of the mother of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, we have the following:—Alice was an admirable woman; all the biographies of Bernard unite in giving her the

Shishak

a Some account of this invasion has been found on the walls of the temple at Karnac.

2 Chr. xii. 2.

b 2 Chr. xii. 15, 16.

In the court of Sheshonk, *i.e.* this very Shishak, at Karnac in Thebes, there is to this day the cartouche of Rehoboam - mulek Tondah, among those of various princes conquered by this King of Egypt.

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And it is the only sculpture yet discovered that connects the history of Egypt with that of Judah.

credit of his early education. He was one of a large family of children, all of whom were fed from the bosom of their mother; for she entertained the idea that the infant, with the milk it drew from a stranger's bosom, imbibed also some portion of the quality and temperament of the nurse: therefore, while her children were young, they had no attendant but herself. They all became remarkable men and women; but the fame of the rest is merged in that of Bernard, who appears, indeed, to have moulded them all to his own bent.[c]

c Mrs. Jameson.

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CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

Abijam

a 2 Chr. xiii. 1, 20.

b He began in 18th year of Jeroboam, and his successor in the 20th year. See *v.* 9.

c 2 Sa. xiv. 27.

d 2 Ki. viii. 19; 2 Chr. xxi. 7.

e 2 Sa. xi. 4, xii. 9. Comp. 1 Sa. xxv. 21; 2 Sa. xxiv. 1.

See *Bp. Hall's Cont.*

"The love principle is stronger than the force principle" — *Dr. A. A. Hodge.*

"The most common of all human complaints is parents groaning under the vices of their children." — *R. Cecil.*

f Baron De Tott.

g Bruce.

1—5. (1) **Abijam**, name prob. Abijah.[a] The change to *m* made to avoid pronouncing the name of God. (2) **three years**,[b] really only a little over two years. Jews reckoned to a king the year in *any part of wh.* he reigned. **Maachah**, comp. 2 Chr. xi. 20—22, xiii. 2. **Abishalom**, prob. Absalom, then daughter must mean grand-daughter.[c] (3) **not perfect**, or whole. (4) **lamp**,[d] ch. xi. 36. **set up his son**, comp. judgment on Jeroboam; ch. xiv. 7—11. (5) **matter of Uriah**,[e] Dav.'s only wilful and presumptuous sin.

For David's sake (*v.* 4).—I. We see the indebtedness of Abijam to a pious ancestor. II. We learn that no man liveth or dieth to himself. The "good that men do is oft," but not always, "interred with their bones." If a man's sins are sometimes, through natural law, visited upon their children; so his uprightness provides a rich harvest for them. III. We are reminded of the lamp of truth and life that we have for the sake of David's son.

His mother's name (*v.* 2).—It has been conjectured by Mr. Baruh that the phrase, "and his mother's name was," etc., when expressed on a king's accession to the throne, at the beginning of his history, does not always refer to his natural mother; but that it is a title of honour and dignity, enjoyed by one of the royal family, denoting her to be the first in rank. This idea appears well founded from the following extracts: "The Oloo Kani is not governess of the Crimea. This title, the literal translation of which is, great queen, simply denotes a dignity in the harem, which the khan usually confers on one of his sisters; or, if he has none, on one of his daughters or relations. To this dignity are attached the revenues arising from several villages, and other rights."[f] "On this occasion the king crowned his mother Malacotawit, conferring upon her the dignity and title of *iteghe*, i.e. as king's mother, regent and governess of the king when under age."[g]

Asa

a Gesenius.

b Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab.

Throughout the pages of history we are struck with the fact that our remarkable men possessed mothers of uncommon talents for good or bad, and great energy

6—10. (6) **war**, as ch. xiv. 30. (7) **written**, *etc.*, 2 Chr. xiii. (8) **city of David**, in the royal sepulchre, as Rehoboam, ch. xiv. 31. (9) **Asa**, *physician, a healing one.*[a] (10) **forty and one years**, during wh. he saw eight kings of Israel.[b] **mother's name**, should be grandmother's, *v.* 2.

Written in the book (*v.* 7).—I. The deeds of kings and of historical personages alone find a place in historical archives. God keeps a book of remembrance for others also. II. Keepers of diaries may remember that there is a book wherein more is recorded than they can register.

Mother and child (*v.* 10).—Sir Walter Scott's mother was a superior woman, well educated, and a great lover of poetry and painting. Byron's mother was proud, ill-tempered, and violent. The mother of Napoleon Bonaparte was noted for her beauty and energy. Lord Bacon's mother was a woman of superior mind and deep piety. The mother of Nero was a murderess. The mother of Washington was pious, pure, and true. The mother of Patrick Henry was marked by her superior conversational powers. The mother of John Wesley was remarkable for her intelligence, piety, and executive ability, so that she has been called "the mother of Methodism." It will be observed that in each of these examples the sons inherited the prominent traits of the mother.

11—15. (11) **right,**[a] and therefore acceptable. The word indicates right heartedness, as well as good actions. (12) **sodomites,** ch. xiv. 24. (13) **his mother,** grandmother, who occupied the position of queen-mother.[b] **idol,**[c] *lit.* a *horror*, an object of terror. **in a grove,** as Asherah, or to Astarte. **destroyed,**[d] cut down; indic. that it was of wood. (14) **high . . removed,** comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 3; temporary removals may have been effected. (15) **dedicated,** or devoted;[e] partially replacing those taken by Shishak

Doing right (*v.* 11).—I. Asa did what was right in the face of opposition. II. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord; though men might contemn. III. He did what was right according to the best model he had—David. IV. If we desire to do right we have a better model—Christ.

King Alfred and his psalter (*v.* 11).—King Alfred the Great encountered many difficulties in obtaining Scriptural knowledge which we have never experienced, and manifested an attachment to the sacred volume not often seen now. In those dark ages learning was considered rather a reproach than an honour to a prince. In addition to which, his kingdom, for many years, was the seat of incessant war. Notwithstanding all this, Alfred found opportunity, not only to read the Word of God, but actually to copy out all the Psalms of David—which book he constantly carried in his bosom. That he profited greatly from reading the Scriptures is no matter of surprise, when we learn that, after the example of David, he earnestly sought Divine teaching, and prayed that the Lord would open his eyes that he might understand His law. He frequently entered the churches secretly in the night for prayer; and there lamented, with sighs, the want of more acquaintance with Divine wisdom. Having drunk into the spirit of the Bible, and experienced the rich consolation it affords, in setting before the burdened sinner a free and full salvation in Jesus, he wished it published to all around; he therefore commenced a translation of the Psalms into Anglo-Saxon, though he did not, however, live to finish the work.

16—19. (16) **war,** petty border conflicts; Asa's first ten years were tolerably quiet. (17) **built,** fortified, made military post of. **Ramah,**[a] now Er Ram (Jos. xviii. 25), on the high road fr. Bethel to Jerus., 5 miles fr. Jerus. **go out or come in,** ostensible reason to check the passing of the relig. people to worship at Jerus. (18) **sent them,** this was an act of sacrilege and distrust, *see* 2 Chr. xvi. 7. **Benhadad,** Son of the Sun:

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of character. It would almost seem, from this circumstance, that the impress of the mother is more frequently stamped on the boy, and that of the father upon the girl — we mean the mental intellectual impress, in distinction from the physical ones.

Asa destroys the idols

a Account given more fully in 2 Chr. xiv.—xvi.

b "There is, in most cases, some one in the harem who, on one account or another, is recognised as the chief lady. The circumstances which usually fix that position are either high birth, priority of marriage, or giving birth to the heir of the throne."—*Kitto.*

c "Word only used here, and 2 Chr. xv. 16. *Mipheletseth*, from *palats*, to tremble, whence *pallatsuth*, horror."—*Gesenius.* "An obscene figure."—*Jamieson.*

d De. xiii. 6—11.

e "Prob. the spoil taken by his father in his victory over Jeroboam, wh. is related in 2 Chr. xiii. 16."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 13. *J. C. Dieterie, Antiq.* 368.

Baasha builds Rama
Asa makes a league with Benhadad

a "It stood on

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an eminence, as the name implies, and commanded the direct route bet. the two cities... If this conquest could have been maintained, it would have crippled Judah seriously, and have almost compelled a transfer of the capital to Hebron." — *Spk. Com.*

1 Sa. vii. 17; Je. xxxi. 15.

"Judge not of God's love by providences, but by promises."— *Wilcox.*

b Harmer.

Ramah destroyed

a Thomson.

b "Stands picturesquely on the top of its steep, terraced hill, on the very edge of the great *Wady Suweinit*, looking northwards to the opposite village, wh. retains its old name of Michmash."— *Porter.*

c Je. xli. 9. Comp. Jos. xviii. 26; 1 Sa. vii. 5.

"Nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence." — *Shakespeare.*

"A man's antecedents are constantly coming up."—*Dr. Crowell*

d Green's Bibl. Dict.

Israel

Nadab, Baasha

a "It is curious to find Issachar furnishing a title of the Syrian kings. (19) **is a league,** or let there be a league bet. us, as there was bet. our fathers.

Hindrances to true worship (*v.* 17).—I. Note the stronghold—Ramah—of Baasha built to prevent the going up to Jerusalem at the great religious festivals of the nation. II. The world still strives to erect its Ramah to hinder religious worship. 1. Infidelity; 2. Quasi-science; 3. Mammon, etc.

Presents (*v.* 19).—I will not push my remarks on the presents of the East any further here, excepting the making this single observation more, that the sending presents to princes to induce them to help the distressed has been practised in these countries in late times, as well as in the days of Asa, of whom we read, that he "took," etc. To us it appears strange that a present should be thought capable of inducing one prince to break with another, and engage himself in war; but as it was anciently thought sufficient, so we find in the Gesta Dei per Francos, that an Eastern nobleman, that had the custody of a castle called Hasarth, quarrelling with his master, the prince of Aleppo, and finding himself obliged to seek for foreign aid, sent presents to Godfrey of Bouillon, to induce him to assist him. What they were we are not told; but gold and silver, the things Asa sent Benhadad, were frequently sent in those times to the crusade princes, and might probably be sent on this occasion to Godfrey.[b]

20—24. (20) **Ijon,** Tell, Dibben,[a] N.W. of site of Dan. **Dan,** Ju. xviii. 7. **Abel-beth-maachah,** 2 Sa. xx. 14. **Cinneroth,** the land of Gennesareth, Jos. xi. 2. (21) **building,** or fortifying. **Tirzah,** ch. xiv. 17. (22) **Geba,**[b] *Jeba*, farther north than Ramah, so better protection to the N. frontier. **Mizpah,**[c] on the northern continuation of the Mt. of Olives. (23) **cities,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xiv. 6, 7. **diseased,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xvi. 12. (24) **Jehoshaphat,** *whom Jehovah judges*, i.e. whose cause He sustains.

The strongholds of the world become the defences of the Church (*v.* 22).—I. This illustrated by the case of Ramah. II. It has been often observed since—1. The world's stronghold of science has been rifled by the Church for its defence: and the world defeated with its own weapons; 2. By the grace of God, men who were as Ramah—Saul of Tarsus, for example—have been made as the outworks of Christianity.

Baasha.—Baasha, son of Ahijah, and commander-in-chief to Nadab, son of Jeroboam. He treacherously killed his master at the siege of Gibbethon, and usurped his kingdom, which he possessed twenty-four years, 1 Kings xv. The better to secure himself in his usurpation, he put all the relations of his predecessor to death; thus accomplishing the predictions of Ahijah against the house of Jeroboam. In 1 Kings xvi. 2. he is said to have been exalted to the kingdom of Israel by God, *i.e.* his accession was according to Divine decree, though he himself was instigated only by his own ambition and covetousness.[d]

25—30. (25) **Nadab,** ch. xiv. 20. (26) **his sin,** ch. xii. 28—33. (27) **Gibbethon,** in the tribe of Dan, a Levitical city. Jos. xix. 44. (28) **and reigned,** by simple usurpation, for Baasha had no claim to the throne.[a] (29) **saying,** *etc.*, ch. xiv. 10—14. (30) **provocation,** such conduct aroused righteous Divine anger.

Nadab (*vv.* 25, 26).—I. His reign was brief. II. His character was bad. How much had his father to answer for? III. His influence was pernicious. He made Israel to sin. How greatly the destiny of nations is affected by their rulers. The same is said of Baasha.

Bajazet.—Tamerlane the Great having made war on Bajazet, Emperor of the Turks, overthrew him in battle, and took him prisoner. The victor gave the captive monarch at first a very civil reception; and, entering in familiar conversation with him, said, "Now, king, tell me freely and truly what thou wouldest have done with me, had I fallen into thy power?" Bajazet, who was of a fierce and haughty spirit, is said to have thus replied: "Had the gods given unto me the victory, I would have enclosed thee in an iron cage, and carried thee about with me as a spectacle of derision to the world." Tamerlane wrathfully replied, "Then, proud man, as thou wouldst have done to me, even so shall I do unto thee." A strong iron cage was made, into which the fallen emperor was thrust; and thus exposed like a wild beast, he was carried along in the train of his conqueror. Nearly three years was passed by the once mighty Bajazet in this cruel state of endurance; and at last being told that he must be carried into Tartary, despairing of then obtaining his freedom, he struck his head with such violence against the bars of the cage, as to put an end to his wretched life.[a]

31—34. (31) **in the book,** *etc.*, same previously referred to, as *v.* 23. (32) **war,** a state of war, rather than great expeditions. (33) **twenty and four years,** a long reign for so bad a man. (34) **way of Jeroboam,** maintained that rebellious and idolatrous attitude that Jer. had commenced.

The moral in history.—Kant, the philosopher, used to say that there were two things which overwhelmed him with awe as he thought of them. One was the star-sown deep of space, without limit and without end; the other was right and wrong. Right, the sacrifice of self to good; wrong, the sacrifice of good to self—not graduated objects of desire, to which we are determined by the degrees of our knowledge; but wide asunder as pole to pole; as light and darkness—one, the object of infinite love; the other, the object of infinite detestation and scorn. It is in this marvellous power in men to do wrong (it is an old story, but none the less true for that)—it is in this power to do wrong—wrong or right, as it lies somehow with ourselves to choose—that the impossibility stands of forming scientific calculations of what men will do before the fact, or scientific explanations of what they have done after the fact. If men were consistently selfish, you might analyse their motives: if they were consistently noble, they would express in their conduct the laws of the highest perfection. But so long as two natures are mixed together, and the strange creature which results from the combinations is now under one influence and now under another, so long you will make nothing of him except from the old moral, or, if you please, imaginative point of view.[a]—*King George III.*—In his majesty's prayer-book, where the worshippers implored the Almighty to bless and preserve "Thy servant George, our most gracious king and governor," these words appear to have been struck out, and the following written with his own hand, "An unworthy sinner."[b]

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king. This tribe had never made, and could have no grounds for making, a claim to pre-eminence. . . . Baasha owed his rise simply to his own audacity, and his known valour and skill as a soldier." — *Spk. Com.*

Comp. 2 Kg. xii. 20.

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."—*Shakespeare.*

b Percy Anec.

war between Asa and Baasha

"O how hard it is to die, and not be able to leave the world any better for one's little life in it."—*Abraham Lincoln.*

"Man is the hero of the eternal epic composed by the Divine intelligence." —*Schelling.*

"Time creeps towards us with folded wings, but when 'tis past us, its wings seem to flap with speed." —*Lowth.*

a Froude's Short Studies.

"Providence conceals itself in the details of human affairs, but becomes unveiled in the generalities of history." — *Lamartine.*

b R. T. S.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 930.

Jehu sent to warn Baasha

a Comp. language of Ahijah to Jeroboam, 1 Ki. xiv. 7—11; also of Samuel to Saul, 1 Sa. xv. 17—19.

b "Not a new prophecy, but a comment of the writer on what has gone before." —*Wordsworth.*

c Hos. i. 4.

"Ill do you know the spectral forms that wait upon a king: care with his furrow'd brow, unsleeping watchfulness, lone secresy, attend his throne by day, his couch by night."—*Lord Russell.*

d Mallet.

Elah, Zimri

a Fuerst.

b Gesenius.

c 1 Ki. iv. 6.

"In Persia 'the steward of the household' acted sometimes as a sort of regent during the king's absence." — *Spk. Com.*

v. 7. *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 105.

In the English Parliament, some years ago, a member moved the appointment of a committee to investigate the cause of intemperance among the people. Another member arose, and said he thought he could tell them without a committee: it was drinking. T[illegible]

1—7. (1) **Jehu,** comp. 2 Chr. xix. 2, 3, xx. 34. **Hanani,** also a prophet, 2 Chr. xvi. 7—10. (2) **out of the dust,**[a] fr. low position; Baasha was not even remotely connected with the royal houses. (3) **posterity,** this the worst punishment to a king, who longs to found a dynasty. (4) **that dieth,** *etc.,* comp. ch. xiv. 11. (5) **his might,** as a soldier; ch. xv. 17—21. (6) **Tirzah,** his capital; ch. xiv. 17. (7) **also,**[b] a repetition of the prophecy to show that Baasha was punished for destroying Jeroboam's family, as well as for his own idolatry. **because,** *etc.,*[c] this the specific point added to the verse.

Jehu (*v.* 1).—This prophet may remind us—I. That even bad men, as Baasha, do not perish without warning. II. That God's servants are not to be choosers of their own work. III. That God's word, whether of warning or promise, will certainly take effect.

Neglectful kings.—

When those whom Heaven distinguishes o'er millions,
Profusely gives them honours, riches, power,
Whate'er the expanded heart can wish; when they,
Accepting the reward, neglect the duty,
Or worse, pervert those gifts to deeds of ruin,
Is there a wretch they rule so mean as they,
Guilty at once of sacrilege to Heaven,
And of perfidious robbery to men?[d]

8—10. (8) **Elah** (*v.* 6), *oak,* or *strength.*[a] **two years,** parts only of two years. (9) **Zimri,** *renowned.*[b] **drunk,** his dissolute habits put him in the power of the conspirator. **steward,** comp. Ahishar's office in Sol.'s reign.[c] (10) **went in,** to the royal presence.

A royal drunkard (*v.* 9).—Besides the fact here incidentally proven that the wines of the East are of an intoxicating nature, the following points may be noted as among the results of drunkenness. I. Bad in any, it is worse in a king, on account of his great influence. II. The habit takes one into inferior society. The king and his steward. III. The condition, by rendering one helpless, exposes him to the assaults of his foes. IV. How many by the same habit have lost the crown of their manhood, their social position, their life, their souls!

Stewards mentioned in Scripture (*v.* 9).—Abraham is the first man mentioned in the Scriptures who had a steward in his house (Gen. xv. 2). Joseph also had a ruler of his house, who in another place is called a "steward," and he "that was over his house." It was to him that the order was given to prepare a feast for his brethren; and to him they related their troubles in reference to the money being found in their sacks. He endeavoured to calm their minds, and said, "Peace be to you, fear not." And he brought Simeon to them, to show that he was alive; and "gave them water to wash their feet." One of the monarchs of Israel was "drinking himself drunk" as a guest in the house of his "steward," when slain by Zimri, the captain of half of his chariots (1 Kings xvi. 9). David also had "stewards" over his "treasures" and "storehouses." And a

similar officer attended to the domestic affairs of Daniel and the other captives. Herod's "steward," Chuza, is mentioned because of his wife's services to our Saviour (Luke viii. 3); and in Matt. xx. 8, we perceive that the "steward" had to pay the labourers.[d]

11—14. (11) **slew,** *etc.*, a reign founded upon murder could but make murder its chief weapon. kinsfolks, this word indicates exceptional severities. (12) **according,** *etc.*, as *vv.* 3, 4. (13) **vanities,**[a] idolatries and vices. (14) **rest,** *etc.*, as *v.* 5.

Way to lose an empire.—Cardinal Mazarine once observed to Don Louis de Haro, prime minister of Spain, that the humane and gentle conduct of the French government had prevented the troubles and revolts of that kingdom, and that the king had not lost a foot of land by them to that day; whereas the inflexible severity of the Spaniards was the occasion that the subjects of that monarchy, wherever they threw off the mask, never returned to their obedience but by the force of arms, as sufficiently appears in the example of the Hollanders, who are in the peaceable possession of many provinces that not many years ago were the patrimony of the King of Spain.[b]

15—20. (15) **seven days,** a very short time, but filled full with blood-shedding. **people,** the army. **Gibbethon,** ch. xiv. 27. (16) **heard say,** the report soon reached them. **Omri,** *servant of Jehovah;*[a] he gave his name to a dynasty.[b] (17) **went up,** fr. plain of Shephelah to the hill country of Israel, on the edge of wh. Tirzah stood. **all Israel,** indic. that public sentiment favoured Omri. (18) **palace,** *etc.*, either the *harem*,[c] or a tower above the rest of the building.[d] (19) **doing evil,**[e] conspiring and murdering. (20) **treason,** *i.e.* the full account of it.

King for a week (*v.* 15).—A short but memorable reign, marked by—I. A popular rumour. II. A popular election. III. And a royal conflagration. IV. Man being in honour abideth not.

A conquering king.—It has been said of Edward, the Black Prince, that he never fought a battle which he did not win; and of the great Duke of Marlborough, that he never besieged a city that he did not take. Shall that be said of men which we deny concerning the Most High God? Is He less successful than some human generals? Shall these invincibly prevail, and grace be liable to defeat. Impossible![f]

21—24. (21) **followed Tibni,**[a] prob. that portion of the people that favoured Zimri. (22) **prevailed,** bec. most of the army were faithful to Omri. **died,** whether by natural or violent death is not indicated.[b] (23) **twelve years,** reckoned fr. his being made king by the army. He only had peaceful possession of the throne for eight years. (24) **hill Samaria,** 7 miles N.W. of Shechem. Modern *Sebastirjeh*. Very suitable site for new capital. **Shemer,** fr. him the place was called *Shimron*.[c] **two talents,** about seven hundred pounds.

The Czar and his governor.—Peter the Great frequently surprised the magistrates by his unexpected presence in the cities of the empire. Having arrived without previous notice at Olonez, he went first to the regency, and inquired of the governor how many suits were depending in the court of chancery. "None, sire," replied the governor. "How happens that?" "I

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being a clear statement of the cause, a clear statement of the cure will be, stop drinking.

d Roberts.

Zimri

a Je. viii. 19, x. 8. 15; Jon ii 8 1 Cor. viii. 4.

"Princes have but their titles for their glories, an outward honour for an inward toil; and for unfelt imaginations, they often feel a world of restless cares." —*Shakespeare.*

b Percy Anec.

Zimri, Omri

a "Fr. *amar*, to bind."—*Gesenius.*

b Mi. vi. 16.

c Ewald. Stanley.

d Gesenius, Wordsworth.

e Job xx. 5; Ps. ix. 16, xxxvii. 35, 36.

"He who seldom thinks of heaven is not likely to get thither; as the only way to hit the mark is to keep the eye fixed upon it."—*Bishop Horne.*

f Bowes.

Tibni, Omri

Samaria

a "The factions that ensued occasioned a four years' duration of anarchy or civil war."—*Jamieson.*

b "According to LXX., a brother of Tibni, named Joram, suffered with him."—*Spk. Com.*

c "Better known to us in the softened shape

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of Samaria, wh. it assumed in the Greek language."—*Kitto.*

Omri

a 1 Ki. xx. 4; this however only hints at previous attacks by Syria.

b Fuerst.

"As husbandmen make use of the very thorns and briers that grow in their fields to stop the gaps and strengthen the fences about them, so should we improve our very sins and failings to fence our souls, that we lie not open to the like temptations of the future."—*Hopkins.*

c Tertullian.

Ahab, Jezebel

a "The great sin of Ahab was his introduction of the worship of Baal, consequent upon his marriage with Jezebel, and his formal establishment of this gross and palpable idolatry as the religion of the state."—*Spk. Com.*

b Wordsworth.

c "A priest of the Phœn. goddess *Astarte*, he rebelled against his brother, *Pheles*, King of Tyre and Sidon, usurped his throne, and occupied it 32 years." — *Josephus.*

d 2 Ki. x. 27.

Jericho rebuilt

e Jos. vi. 26.

endeavour to prevent lawsuits, and conciliate the parties; I act in such a manner that no traces of difference remain on the archives; if I am wrong, your indulgence will excuse me." "I wish," replied the Czar, "that all governors would act on your principles. Go on, God and your sovereign are equally satisfied."

25—28. (25) **horse,** prob. putting energy into the idolatrous worship, and "reducing calf-worship to a formal system." (26) **way of,** *etc.*, the usual formula; *vv.* 13, 19, etc. (27) **might,** in war against Tibni, and against Syria.[a] (28) **Samaria,** henceforth the capital city. **Ahab,** prob. meaning *God is friend.*[b]

A celebrated sinner (*v.* 25).—I. Those that went before him went to great extremes of wickedness. II. They none of them prospered in their wickedness. III. Omri excelled them all in sin. IV. While we deprecate his folly let us examine ourselves. V. What multitudes of men are totally unimpressed by the examples and warnings on all hands.

The God of patience.—God is an abundantly sufficient depository of patience. If thou placest a wrong in His hands, He is an avenger; if a loss, He is a restorer; if pain, He is a physician; if death, He is the resurrection. What a license hath patience, in having God for her debtor; and not without cause; for she observeth all His pleasure, she interposeth her aid in all His commands! She fortifieth faith, guideth peace, assisteth charity, instructeth humility. She sitteth on the throne of that most kind and gentle Spirit, who is not in the gathering of the whirlwind, nor in the blackness of the cloud, but belongeth to the soft, calm, clear, and simple, such as Elijah saw Him at the third time (1 Kings xix. 12). For where God is, there is also His foster-child—Patience.[c]

29—33. (29) **twenty and two,** according to our mode of reckoning, *twenty-one.* (30) **above all,**[a] *v.* 33; ch. xxi. 25. (31) **Jezebel,** "the name is perhaps connected with *Baal-Zebul.*[b] **Ethbaal,** *with Baal.*[c] (32) **altar,** or pillar. **house of,** temple of.[d] (23) **grove,** the *asherah,* or image of Astarte, the companion to the image of Baal.

Like sire, like son (*v.* 30).—I. The wicked son of a wicked father. II. Ahab unwarned by the evil life of his father. III. His father's great crimes were trifles to Ahab, who introduced yet other forms of idolatrous worship, and worse than the rest. IV. For the end of this wicked king *see* xxii. 37, 38.

Baal.—It will be observed that Jezebel, who introduced and so jealously supported this worship, was the daughter of a Phœnician king—Eth-*baal,* the king of Zidon, which proves it to have been the Baal, or great god, of that people. It was therefore also the same Baal whose worship was at a later period introduced by Athaliah, the daughter of this same Jezebel, into the kingdom of Judah. This single fact is so conclusive as to the identity of this Baal with that of Phœnicia, that we shall not dwell on others which might be adduced from similarity of worship, and other circumstances. It will be observed that both Jeze*bel* and her father Eth-*baal* have the name of the idol incorporated with their own.

34. build Jericho, wilfully disregarding the curse laid upon it.[a] **set up,** *etc.*, i.e. his firstborn son died on his laying the new foundations. **gates,** *etc.*, on this occasion the youngest

died. We need not suppose that Jericho had been all this time uninhabited;[b] the point is that it had been unprotected and unfortified.

Two sunsets on the hills of Jericho.—An epitaph on the gravestone of two children. Why have these two little lives been so prematurely taken? Jehovah here vindicates His own word and righteousness, in writing the household of this Beth-elite childless. Note the history and character of Hiel. He may have been an atheist, proud, conceited. May have had wrong views of God. Learn:—Beware of resisting God.[c]

Loss of a child.—

Can I, who have for others oft compiled
The songs of death, forget my sweetest child?
We have this sign of joy, that many days
While on the earth his struggling spirit stays,
The name of Jesus in his mouth contains
His holy food, his sleep, his ease from pains.
Oh may that sound be rooted in my mind
Of which in him such strong effect I find!
Dear Lord, receive my son, whose winning love
To me was like a friendship far above
The course of nature, or his tender age:
Whose looks could all my bitter griefs assuage;
Let his pure soul—ordained seven years to be
In that frail body, which was part of me—
Remain my pledge in heaven, as sent to show
How to this port at every step I go.[d]

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[b] 2 Sa. x. 5.

"In his days, prob. means under Ahab's direction."—*Keil.*

[c] *Dr. J. R. Macduff.*

"A child mounted on the shoulder of a man may see further than himself; or a youth standing on the top of a hill may see more than a giant at its base; even so the little ones that Jesus has taken to Himself in heaven may know more of the things of God than the wise, the prudent, and the mighty, who live in this valley of mists and shadows."—*John Bate.*

[d] *Beaumont.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 910.

Elijah

he hides by Cherith

1—7. (1) **Elijah,** *Jehovah He is God;* or, *Jehovah is my God.* **Tishbite,** of Tishbe, a place in Gilead beyond the Jordan. **inhabitants,** same word as above trans. Tishbite; so read, "The Tishbite of Tishbe in Gilead."[a] **said,** this abrupt introduction is characteristic of the man. (2) **word,** *etc.*, usual way of describing Div. communic. to the prophets. (3) **Cherith,**[b] this cannot be identified, nor even whether it was E. or W. of Jordan. (4) **ravens,** some think this should be *Arabians.* (5) **went,**[c] obediently, and trustingly. (6) **ravens,** see *v.* 4. (7) **dried up,** bec. only fed by the rains.

A particular providence (*vv.* 2—4).—Belief in God's particular providence may be said to include—I. The acknowledgment of God's hands. II. The conviction of God's care in all things. Both these the prophet Elijah exemplified: the first, in obeying the unexpected command. "Get thee hence, and hide thyself," etc.; the second, in depending upon the promise of a miraculous provision.[d]

Ravens—Orebim.—It will be known to most that originally the Hebrew Bible was written simply with consonants, and that the vowels—which are not letters at all, but simply points placed below the true letters—are a modern innovation. Learned Hebraists (*e.g.* Lightfoot, Boothroyd, etc.) prefer the old original Hebrew, which is still used in the Jewish synagogues, where custom supplies the sound. The introduction of the vowels to represent sounds was to a great extent arbitrary, and not always

[a] "In forming to ourselves a conception of the great Israelite prophet, we must always bear in mind that the wild and mountainous Gilead, wh. bordered on Arabia, and was half Arab in customs, was the country wherein he grew up."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] "Tradition points it out in a small winter torrent, a little below the ford at Bethshan."—*Jamieson.* Ps. xxxi. 20 lxxxiii. 3; He. xi. 38; Ro. xii. 6, 14.

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c Pr. iii. 5; Jno. xv. 14; Mat. vi. 31—33.

See *N. Alexander*, iii. 335; *T. Robinson*, ii.; *Dr. F. W. Krummacher, Elijah*; *R. W. Evans*, i.; *J. Williams*, 222.

v. 1. *J. Morris*, i. 1.

vv. 1—6. *J. Saurin*, v. 380.

vv. 4—6. *Dr. Kitto, Journal New Ser.* vii.

v. 6. *A. Roberts*, ii. 129.

d C. Bullock.

e Daily Bibl. Ill. iii. 210, *ff.*

Sterne writes: "I asked a hermit once in Italy, how he could venture to live alone in a single cottage on the top of a mountain, a mile from any habitation. He replied that, 'Providence was his very next-door neighbour.'"

f J. C. Gray, Bibl. Lore.

he goes to Zarephath

a Ayre.

b Mat. x. 41, 42, xxv. 35, 40.

Ob. 20; Mat. xv. 21—28; Lu. iv. 26.

"Elijah may have been sent to this place, so near the city of Jezebel's father, as one where it was most unlikely that he would be searched for." — *Spk. Com.*

with the happiest results. Hence the word *orebim*, here rendered "ravens," is precisely the same word which is elsewhere—with the vowel points slightly altered—rendered "Arabians," or "Arabs." So far, therefore, as the word is concerned, the food may have been brought to the prophet by Arabs. The most distinguished of the Jewish rabbis incline to this idea, and so also do many others, including our own Dr. Kitto, who illustrates the changes wrought in words by the introduction of the vowels, by the word GRN, which by the addition of vowels may be *grain*, or *green*, or *groan*, or *grin*.[e] Now on the supposition that Dr. Kitto and others who hold this view are right, is there anything in the history that by way of coincidence will support it? Yes, there is. We find, on glancing at the top of the page in our Bible with marginal notes, that the date of the event is B.C. *cir.* 910—about 910. The chronology is a little uncertain. It may have been two or three years before or after. On turning to 2 Chron. xvii. 11, we find that Arabians were in that region at about that time, B.C. 914. They must have been there some time, for we cannot suppose that 15,400 animals were collected and driven over all at once. The quantity is accounted for by the famine that prevailed at that time. The probability is, that the Arabs, finding a good market in this time of general scarcity, and having also political reasons for conciliating the king of Judah, made a sort of depot on the banks of the Jordan, and from time to time sent across the flocks they collected; some for sale, and some as presents to the king. It is also a curious coincidence that Elijah was himself a native of that very region, "*a Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead.*" Added to the fact that he was their own countryman, there are also the circumstances of Arab hospitality and sympathy with outlawed men to be taken into account. Being the allies of the king of Judah, they would be the more ready to assist one upon whose head a price had been set by the king of Israel. There are also some very important considerations of a moral kind that favour this hypothesis; but these we pass over, as we have to do with coincidences only.[f]

8—11. (8) **Zarephath,** Phœn. town midway bet. Tyre and Sidon; called in N. T. *Sarepta;* mod. village *Sarafend.*[a] (10) **gathering of sticks,** an indic. of her extreme poverty. (11) **morsel of bread,**[b] he was hungry after long travelling.

The prophet's hiding-place (*v.* 9).—I. Who would think of looking for him in such a place? The known poverty of the widow would prevent any from thinking she entertained a guest. II. What widow was ever more highly honoured; and yet in the honouring deemed herself impoverished? III. How wonderfully was her hospitality rewarded! Learn:—The safety of the servants of God, and the certainty of the reward of kindness.

The hospitality of the poor.—A wealthy merchant in this country once gave the following account:—As he was standing at his door, a venerable grey-headed man approached him and asked an alms. He answered him with severity, and demanded why he lived so useless a life. The beggar answered that "age disabled him for labour, and he had committed himself to the providence of God, and the kindness of good people." The rich man was at this time an infidel. He ordered the old man to depart, at the same time casting some reflections on the providence

of God. The venerable beggar descended the steps, and kneeling at the bottom offered up the following prayer: "O my gracious God, I thank Thee that my bread and water is sure; but I pray Thee, in thy intercession above, to remember this man; he hath reflected on Thy providence. Father! forgive him, he knows not what he saith." Thus the present scene ended. The words, "Father! forgive him, he knows not what he saith," constantly rung in the ears of the rich man. He was much disconcerted the following night. The next day, being called on business to a neighbouring town, he overtook the old man on the road. As he afterwards confessed, the sight almost petrified him with guilt and fear. He dismounted, when an interesting conversation ensued. At the close of it the old man remarked, "Yesterday, I was hungry, and called at the door of a rich man. He was angry, and told me he did not believe in the providence of God, and bid me depart; but at the next house I had a plentiful meal. And this, mark ye, was at the house of a poor woman!" The wealthy man confessed that, at this moment, he was pierced with a sense of guilt. He then gave some money to the poor man, of whom he never could hear afterwards; yet the sound of these words, being impressed on his mind by the last interview, "He knows not what he saith," never left him till he was brought to Christian repentance.

12—16. (12) **Lord thy God,** either she herself worshipped Jehovah,[a] or she recognised in the prophet an Israelite. **cake,** Heb. *maogh*, a cake baked under ashes, round in shape.[b] **oil,** olive oil. **eat it and die,** for the effects of the drought seem to have reached Phœnicia.[c] (13) **little cake,** this tried her faith in his word, whether she could trust the assurance of *v.* 14. (14) **waste,** away, even by daily using from it. (15) **her house,** consisting of her son; there is no hint of servants. **days,** prob. **a** year. (16) **according,** *etc.*,[d] *v.* 14.

The barrel of meal and the cruse of oil (*v.* 16).—This miracle illustrates a principle in connection with—I. Economy. For what can so well define economy as making much out of little? Where it exists there will seldom be absent "the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil." II. Providence. As a rule, when economy may be vain, God's special care will insure for the good "the barrel of meal," etc. III. Piety. We never starve in spiritual life for lack of help. IV. Generosity. This woman gave and got. But let us remember that she gave unselfishly, and not in order to get. Moreover, she gave to her utmost.[e]

Two sticks (*v.* 12).—So said the widow of Zarephath to the prophet Elijah How often do we see females, just before the time of boiling their rice, strolling about in search of a few sticks to make it ready. All their fires are made of wood, or dried cows' dung, and in a country where there is so much jungle, and so little rain, they seldom trouble themselves before the moment they require it. But the widow said that she was gathering two sticks; and it is not a little singular to find that the Hindoos often use the same number when it refers to many things. "Well, Venasi, what are you looking for?" "I am looking for two sticks to prepare my rice." "Child, go fetch me *irendu-taddi*, two sticks, to make ready my curry." "Alas! I cannot find two sticks to make the water hot." "My lord, I only ask for two mouthfuls of rice." "Ah! sir, if you will allow me

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See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

v. 9 *H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* ii. 326.

"I saw a piece of paper on the grass. I picked it up; it was a part of a letter; the beginning was wanting, the end was not there; I could make nothing of it. Such is providence. You cannot see beginning or end—only a part. When you can see the whole, then the mystery will be unveiled."—*Rev. Thomas Jones.*

the widow's store

a Keil.

b Gesenius.

c "Josephus quotes a testimony fr. the Phœn. history of Menander, relating that a long drought prevailed in that country in the reign of Ethbaal, the father of Jezebel."—*Wordsworth.*

d Mat. xv. 28; Jno. xi. 40.

v. 12. *F. Webb*, ii. 229; *A. Cleeve*, 29.

e H. J. Martyn.

vv. 13, 14. *J. Fawcett*, iii. 290; *E. Bickersteth*, iii. 405.

v. 14. *Dr. G. D'Oyly*, ii. 340; *R. W. Dibdin*, 59.

vv. 15, 16. *R. Cecil, Wks.* iii. 34; *J. H. Gurney, Ss. O. T.* 175.

v. 16. *L. Sterne*, i. 113; *Dr. A. Grant, Ss.* ii. 105; *C. Wordsworth*, ii.

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to repeat two words in your ear, I shall be satisfied." "Good, have you any thing more to say?" "No, sir." "Then I have not two words for that" (meaning, he does not object). Any person who has been in the East will recognise, in these quotations, a figure of speech he has heard a thousand times.*f*

the widow's son dies

17—19. (17) **no breath**, no spirit, or soul,*a* comp. Ge. ii. 7. (18) **what**, *etc.*, the expression of distress at the consequences of entertaining the prophet, esp. the bringing down punishment upon her.*b* **my sin**, poss. some special sin in her past life. (19) **loft**, better the upper room, the part usually given to a guest. Heb. *Alyyah.*c

Elijah in the loft; or, the outward and the spiritual contrasted (*v.* 19).—We are here taught—I. Not to judge of a man's spiritual state from the circumstances of his outward condition. II. To trust in God's providential kindness, even in circumstances apparently the most adverse. III. That important spiritual duties are often committed to men of very humble temporal condition. IV. That future sublime rewards await all the servants of God.*d*

A sleeping child.—

Oh, that my spirit's eye could see
Whence burst those gleams of ecstasy!
That light of dreaming soul appears
To play from thoughts beyond thy years.
Thou smil'st, as if thy soul were soaring
To heaven, and heaven's God adoring!
And who can tell what visions high
May bless an infant's sleeping eye!
What brighter throne can brightness find
To reign on than an infant's mind,
Ere sin destroy or errors dim
The glory of the Seraphim?

Oh, vision fair! that I could be
Again as young, as pure as thee!
Vain wish! the rainbow's radiant form
May view, but cannot brave the storm.
Years can bedim the gorgeous dyes
That paint the bird of Paradise.
And years, so fate has ordered, roll
Clouds o'er the summer of the soul.*e*

Elijah restores him to life

20—24. (20) **brought evil**, such it seemed, but Elijah felt sure of some purpose of mercy. (21) **stretched**, or measured; comp. 2 Ki. iv. 34. (22) **soul . . again**, obs. that death is figured as "giving up the ghost." (23) **chamber**, loft of *v.* 19. (24) **know**, the miracle confirmed her faith.

The widow's son raised by Elijah (*vv.* 22. 23).—Notice—I. Her trouble. It was—1. Unexpected; 2. Singular; 3. In her apprehension, penal. II. Her deliverance. Notice—1. How it was wrought; 2. How it was received. Learn:—(1) How to interpret providences; (2) How to improve them.*a*

Death of a child.—One Sabbath evening, soon after, as she was sitting beside her parents at the door of their hut, looking first for a long while on their faces, and then for a long while on the sky, though it was not yet the stated hour of worship she suddenly

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c "The mode of building, and the custom of giving the upper room to the guests, was prob. the same in Elijah's time as now."—*Thomson.*

v. 18. *R. J. Wilberforce*, i. 327; *J. C. M. Bellew*, 257.

d Homilist.

"The death we feared was but a grey eve 'tween two shining days."—*Alexander Smith.*

"Go, golden lily, bloom thou on the breast of everlasting sanctity."—*Bailey.*

e Wilson.

v. 22. *R. Valpy*, i. 163.

v. 23. *St. Augustine, Op.* vii. 70; *J. S. M. Anderson*, 18.

v. 24. *W. Reading*, iv. 14; *J. Morton*, i. 171; *Bp. Fulford*, ii. 190

a C. Simeon, M.A. "In his moral village, God cultivates many

knelt down, and leaning on their knees, with hands clasped more fervently than her wont, she broke forth into tremulous singing of that hymn which from her lips they never heard without unendurable tears:

"The hour of my departure's come,
I hear the voice that calls me home;
And last, O Lord, let trouble cease,
And let Thy servant die in peace!"

They carried her fainting to her little bed, and uttered not a word to one another till she revived. The shock was sudden, but not unexpected, and they knew not that the hand of death was upon her, although her eyes soon became brighter and brighter, they thought, than they had ever been before. But forehead, cheeks, lips, neck, and breast, were all as white, and to the quivering hands that touched them almost as cold, as snow. Ineffable was the bliss in those radiant eyes; but the breath of words was frozen, and that hymn was almost her last farewell. Some few words she spake—and named the hour and day she wished to be buried. Her lips could then just faintly return the kiss, and no more; a film came over the now dim blue of her eyes; the father listened for her breath, and then the mother took his place, and leaned her ear to the unbreathing mouth, long deluding herself with its life-like smile; but a sudden darkness in the room, and a sudden stillness, most dreadful both, convinced their unbelieving hearts at last that it was death.[b]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1—6. (1) **third year,** of his sojourn at Zarephath: whole time of drought was 3½ years.[a] **shew . . Ahab,** comp. ch. xvii. 1. (2) **went,** in the fearlessness of obedience. (3) **Obadiah,** *servant of Jehovah.*[b] **governor,** as ch. xvi. 9. **feared,**[c] *etc.*, but secretly. (4) **cut off,** this persecution is not otherwise narrated.[d] **prophets,** term here used for pious people.[e] **cave,**[f] with natural caverns the limestone hills of Judæa and Samaria abound. (5) **find grass,**[g] in moist places. (6) **Ahab went,** *etc.*, such an occupation would in the E. be thought quite befitting a king.

Obadiah (*v.* 8).—We see here that true religion—I. Is sometimes found in the most unlikely places. An ancient saint in the house of Ahab, and that person the governor of his house! II. May flourish under great external disadvantages. III. May reach the maturity of his growth amidst hindrances and persecutions. A living piety will make progress, and find room to spread itself. IV. Secures the special protection, as well as the favour, of the Lord. They dwell safely whom the Lord keeps.

Drought in the East (*v.* 5).—There had not been rain upon the earth for three years and six months; a circumstance which must have had a fatal effect on vegetation. Situated in a temperate climate, what would England be under such circumstances? In droughts in the East, which have lasted from six to ten months, how often have we seen men, like Obadiah, going along in marshy places, or by the side of tanks, in search of grass for their cattle! See the poor fellow with a basket (made of the leaves of palmira) on his back, a little instrument (which works like a Dutch hoe) in his hand! He strolls from fountain to

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flowers seemingly only for their exquisite beauty and fragrance. For when bathed in soft sunshine, they have burst into blossom, then the Divine hand gathers them from the earthly fields to be kept in crystal vases in the deathless mansions above. Thus little children die—some in the sweet bud, some in the fuller blossom; but never too early to make heaven fairer and sweeter with their immortal bloom. Verily, to the eye of faith nothing is fairer than the death of young children. Sight and sense, indeed, recoil from it."—*D. C. Wadsworth.*

b Prof. Wilson.

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the drought

Ahab, Obadiah

a Lu. iv. 25; Jas. v. 17.

b Corresponds to the Phœn. *Abdelim*, and the modern Arabic, *Abdallah.*

c Ge. xxii. 12, xlii. 18.

d "It prob. was in revenge for Elijah's causing the drought, as she supposed, by magic power."—*Wordsworth.*

"Prob. the command to hide at Cherith alone saved Elijah fr. being one of the victims."—*Speaker's Com.*

e Jamieson.

f Jos. x. 17; Ju. vi. 2, 1 Sa. xiii.

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brook: and no sooner does he see a green patch of verdure, than he runs with eagerness to the spot. Perhaps he meets another in search of the same thing, when each declares he had the first view. They set to work, snarling at each other, and dealing out all kinds of abuse, till they have completely cleared the place of every green blade. Wherever there is a stream or an artificial watercourse, there the eye is refreshed with delightful verdure. But look a few yards from the place, and you see the withered herbage, which apparently is gone beyond recovery: but which, in a few hours, would start into fresh life, if visited by showers. The effect of rain operates like enchantment on the scene; and the English stranger is often reminded of the green fields of his own native land.[h]

7—10. (7) **met him,** confronted him; appeared suddenly before him. **thou that,** *etc.*, or, art thou *here*. (8) **behold Elijah,** only these two words were spoken, and these lose their force by any addition to them. (9) **sinned,** regarding the commission as certainly fatal (*v.* 12), he thinks a judgment on himself must be intended. **servant,** slave. (10) **no nation,** *etc.*,[a] not strictly true; reference is to those nations over wh. Ahab had influence. **took an oath,** made them solemnly swear.

The timidity of a good man (*v.* 9).—I. Obadiah a good man amid corrupting influences. II. Obadiah a good man called upon to discharge a dangerous duty. III. Obadiah a good man regarding his life in peril through the tyranny of a wicked king. IV. Obadiah a good man counting his life dearer than duty.

What have I sinned (*v.* 9).—Obadiah asked this question of Elijah, when the prophet wished him to go and tell Ahab, his bitter enemy. "Behold, Elijah is here." Thus, a person requested to do anything which implies danger or difficulty, asks, *Ennapollapposey-thane?* "What evil or sin have I done?" The question is also asked, when a man is visited with affliction, "What evil has he done?"[b]—*Taking an oath*—People in England would be astonished and appalled at the frequency and nature of the oaths of the heathen. A man's assertion or affirmation, in common conversation, is seldom believed. Thus, men may be heard in the streets, in the fields, or bazaars, and children in the schools or the play-grounds, say, "Swear you will do this;" "Now take an oath you have not done it." Then they swear by the temple, or its lamp, by their parents, or children, and appeal to their deities for a confirmation of the assertion.[c]

11—16. (11) **behold,** *etc.*, as *vv.* 8, 14. (12) **carry thee,**[a] the sudden appearance and disappearance of Elijah had already impressed the people. Obad. did not fear his meeting Ahab so much as the effect of disappointing and seeming to delude the king. (13) **was it not,** indic. uncertainty of Elij.'s knowledge of the kindness of Obad. (14) **behold,** *vv.* 8, 11. (15) **surely,** this removed Obad.'s great fear. (16) **went,** turning in the direction of Ahab's search. The prophet and king prob. met near S.E. of Carmel.

The young admonished (*v.* 12).—I. We shall consider youth as the most favourable season in which to commence a religious course. 1. It presents the fewest obstacles; 2. It is the most honourable period for this purpose; 3. It is the most profitable:

6, xii. 1, xxiv. 3; Je. xxxiii. 27; He. xi. 38.

g "Corn must have been imported fr Egypt. etc.. but fresh grass was needed for the cattle." —*Jamieson.* See *Bp. Hall, Cont., also J. Foster's Lect.* i. 263.

v. 1. *J. S. M. Anderson.* 35; *B. E. Nicholls,* 316.

v. 3. *E. Butcher,* 296.

h Roberts.

Elijah meets Obadiah

a "Ahab's purpose in seeking Elijah thus may have been to force him to revoke the magic spell by wh. they may have thought that the drought had been produced." —*Wordsworth.*

b Roberts.

c Ibid.

The holiest principles do not suffice: we must have God Himself. Apart from Him, the most powerful principles are no better than a sword in the hand of a little child or of a drunken man.

and sends Obadiah to Ahab

a Comp. 2 Ki. ii. 16; Eze. iii. 12, 14, viii. 3; Ac. viii. 39.

v. 12. *Max. Buck, A Ser.* 1704; *N. Parkhurst,* i. 69; *Dr. E. Calamy, A Ser.* 1714; *Dr. T. Gibbons,* 313; *Dr. N. Lardner,* x. 204; *J. Buck-*

at no other period can we begin so advantageously. II. The beneficial influence of early piety over the remainder of your days. It will have a good influence over your bodies, your secular concerns. It will secure from dangers to which you are exposed in a season of life the most perilous. It will be beneficial in forming connections and establishing plans for life. Its influence will be happy in your spiritual progress and pleasure. It will be of unspeakable advantage in the calamities of life. It will bless old age. III. The consequences of procrastination. Make two suppositions :—1. That, after all your delay, you obtain repentance. Allowing the hope to be well founded, nothing can be more unreasonable than delay. There are four circumstances of peculiar aggravation in a late repentance : (1) Singular abuse of Divine goodness ; (2) Multitude of evil to be reviewed ; (3) Injury done to others ; (4) The uncertainty attending it. 2. That—and this is far more probable—after delay you do not obtain it.[b]

Decision of a youth (*v.* 12).—At Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, a child named Cyril, in a time of heavy persecution, called continually upon the name of Jesus Christ ; and neither threats nor blows could divert him from it. Many children of his own age persecuted him, and his heathen father turned him out of doors. At last, he was brought before the judge, who threatened him, and expostulated with him. With undaunted boldness he said, "I rejoice to bear your reproaches : God will receive me. I am glad that I am expelled out of our house : I shall have a better mansion. I fear not death, because it will introduce me to a better life." He was condemned to the flames, with a full expectation that he would recant, and save his life. He remained firm, saying, "Your fire and your sword are insignificant : I go to a better house and more excellent riches ; despatch me presently that I may enjoy them." He suffered, being burned to death amid a throng of wondering spectators.

17—20. (17) **art thou,** *etc.*, lit. *Art thou here, O troubler of Israel!* Obs. the haughty and authoritative tone of the king's address. **troubleth,** the term applied only to Achan.[a] (18) **thou,**[b] the prophet does not quail before the king ; and it becomes the king's turn to humble himself before the prophet. **Baalim,** Ju. ii. 11. (19) **Carmel,**[c] "on the S.E. end of it, looking towards Jezreel."[d] **prophets,** or *priests ;* teachers. **eat at,**[e] are maintained by food from the court. (20) **children of Is.,** a national assembly was convened. Ahab no doubt felt sure of victory for Baal.

A false charge heroically answered (*vv.* 17, 18).—A time to speak and a time to be silent. There is a meekness—like that of Christ—that is silent before unjust accusation. There is also a meekness—like that of Moses, the meekest of men—that speaks in thunder. I. Ahab's insinuation. 1. Some truth in it : a good man, the Bible, and religion do trouble the ungodly ; 2. Yet it was false in reality : the wicked ever try to shift the blame. II. Elijah's brave reply. 1. It was fearless ; 2. It was faithful ; 3. It was not without proof.

The prophets of Baal (*v.* 19).—We are not, I apprehend, to suppose that these eight hundred and fifty prophets, or even the four hundred of the groves, ate at the royal table, where Jezebel herself took her refection ; for though I am sensible it is not

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worth, 280; *C Simeon, Wks.* iii. 398.

b W. Jay.

"Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul; we may preserve it in the midst of the bitterest pain, if our will remains firm and submissive. Peace in this life springs from acquiescence even in disagreeable things, not an exemption from suffering."—*Fénelon.*

"Be penitent, for the world is broad and wide." —*Shakespeare.*

"Onward in faith, and leave the rest to Heaven." —*Southey.*

"Search others for their virtues, and thyself for thy vices."—*Fuller.*

Elijah meets Ahab and challenges the priests of Baal

a Jos. vii. 25.

b "In that hour of extreme despair, the voice of Elijah sounded with an authority wh. it had never had before."—*Stanley.*

c "Forty miles before Tyre, and little more than half that distance W. of Nazareth, and forming the S.W. boundary towards the sea of the plain of Esdraelon, extends for several miles the mountain ridge of Carmel. Its beauty is celebrated in Scrip.

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and even in this day of desolation it sustains its ancient praise." —*Kitto.*

d Thomson.

e "Oriental etiquette would not have allowed them to eat at the table of the queen, wh. was spread in the seraglio." — *Spk. Com*

ve. 17, 18. *W. Reading*, iii. 398; *Bp. Heber*, ii. 146; *J. G. Dowling*, 94.

f Harmer.

Carmel: Elijah and the priests of Baal

a Jos. xxiv. 15, 1 Sa. vii. 3; Mat. vi. 24; Lu. xvi. 13.

'Lit., 'How long leap ye upon two branches?' a beautiful and poetical allusion to the restlessness of a bird, wh. remains not long in one position, but is continually hopping from branch to branch."—*Kitto.*

b C. H. Spurgeon.

"'How long will ye go lame upon tottering knees?' that is, waver backwards and forwards unsteadily between truth and falsehood, Jahveh and Baal." — *Ewald.*

c H Stowell.

v. 21. *Dr. Featley, Cla Mys.* 776; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, i. 139; *J. Edwards*, ii. 57; *Bp. Porteus*, *Wks.* iii. 195; *Dr. A Grant*, ii. 25; *G Burder*, 5; *Dr. A. Ives*, ii. 469; *Dr. J. Milner*, ii. 68; *H. E. Manning*, iii. 54.

unusual in the East for servants to eat at the same table where their masters have eaten, after their masters have done; and that several hundreds eat in the palace of the Eastern princes; yet it could never be thought necessary by Jezebel to have four hundred chaplains in waiting at once at court. I should think the words mean, that these four hundred prophets of the groves fed daily at a common table, in or near the temple of that idol which they served, and which was provided for at the expense of Jezebel, living there in a kind of collegiate way, as the prophets of Jehovah appear to have done. Their business was, I suppose, to sing the praises of the idols they worshipped; and to watch from time to time in their temples, under the pretence of receiving oracular answers to the inquiries of those that came to consult them; and, it may be, to teach the worshippers in what form of words to address the deity they served.*f*

21—24. (21) **came,** stood forth, full in view. As the caller of the assembly it rested on him to explain its object. **hath ye,***a* indic. that as yet the Baal worship was not generally accepted. **opinions,** thoughts. **the Lord,** better read *Jehovah.* **not a word,** partly through fear of the king; partly bec. they were inclined to join the Jehovah and the Baal worship together. (22) **I only,** in the exercise of prophetic office; or I only am here present. (23) **them choose,** Elij. removes all possible accusation of his deception. (24) **by fire,** as Baal was the Sun-god, this test gave them every advantage.

Elijah's appeal to the undecided (*v.* 21).—I. The prophet insisted upon the distinction which existed between the worship of Baal and the worship of Jehovah. II. He called all waverers to an account for the amount of time which they had consumed in making their choice: "How long halt ye?" III. He charged them with the absurdity of their position. IV. He met any objections by showing that they were not decided in opinion because they were not decided in practice: "If God be God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him." V. He stated the ground of this practical claim.*b*—*How long halt ye?* (*v.* 21).—I. The case before us is fearfully prevalent now. If infidelity slay her thousands, indifference slays her tens of thousands. II. A few words to waverers. Let us reason together on the position you occupy. 1. Its gross inconsistency; 2. Its folly; 3. Its baseness and guilt; 4. Its unhappiness; 5. Its peril.*c*

Heathen fanaticism (*v.* 28).—In this we have the exact picture of Oriental fanaticism, such as may still be seen in Eastern religions. As the Mussulman dervishes work themselves into a frenzy by the invocation of "Allah! Allah!" until the words themselves are inarticulate gasps; as Eastern Christians will recite the "Kyrie eleison," the "Gospidi Ponictou," in a hundredfold repetition; as the pilgrims round the church of St. John at Samaria formerly, and round the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre now, race and run and tumble, in order to bring down the Divine fire into the midst of them—so the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (for the prophets of Ashtaroth seem to have shrunk from the contest) performed their wild dances round their altar, or upon it, springing up or sinking down, with the fantastic gestures which Orientals alone can command, as if by an internal mechanism, and screaming with that sustained energy which believes that it will be heard from its much

speaking, from morn till noon, "Hear us, O Baal, hear us!" .... And like the dervishes, who eat glass, seize living snakes with their teeth, throw themselves prostrate for their mounted chiefs to ride over them; like the Corybantian priests of Cybele; like the fakirs of India,—they now, in their frenzied state, tossed to and fro the swords and lances which formed part of their fantastic worship, and gashed themselves and each other, till they were smeared with blood, and mingled with their loud yells to the silent and sleeping divinity those ravings which formed the dark side of ancient prophecy.[d]

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"Nineteen out of twenty become good or bad as they choose to make themselves."—*F. Buxton.*

d Stanley.

25—29. (25) **choose you,** giving them every advantage. (26) **dressed it,** for sacrifice. **they leaped,** *etc.*,[a] working themselves up into a frenzy. (27) **mocked them,** one of the few cases of *irony* in Scrip.[b] **he is a god,** surely you cannot be mistaken in that, he must be busy, or asleep, etc. (28) **after their manner,**[c] supposing the gods pleased with human blood. **lancets,** spears, or lances; not our mod. medical instrument. (29) **prophesied,** this word is sometimes applied to religious ecstasy.[d] **evening sacrifice,** toward this time, *see v.* 36. Soon after midday.

the priests cry in vain; Elijah derides Baal

The instructive example of Baal's priests (*vv.* 28, 29).—I. The priests of Baal served a god whom they invested with sanguinary attributes, and to whom, as they supposed, it would be acceptable that they should lacerate their bodies while acting as worshippers. And they did not at all shrink from doing what their creed required them to do. Is our zeal thus great? II. They persevered in spite of the keen ridicule of Elijah. A lesson here on courage. III. They persisted in praying, though no answer was vouchsafed: a lesson on importunity.[e]

Controversy (*v.* 27).—It is many times expedient that things really ridiculous should appear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and shunned; and to render them such, is the part of a facetious wit, and usually can only be compassed thereby. When to impugn them with downright reason, or to check them by serious discourse, would signify nothing; then representing them in a shape strangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raising derision at them, may effectually discountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expose the wicked superstition of those who worshipped Baal; "Elias," saith the text, "mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." By which one pregnant instance it appeareth that reasoning pleasantly abusive in some cases may be useful. The Holy Scripture does not indeed use it frequently (it not suiting the Divine simplicity and stately gravity thereof to do so); yet its condescension thereto at any time sufficiently doth authorise a cautious use thereof. When sarcastical twitches are needful to pierce the thick skins of men, to correct their lethargic stupidity, to rouse them out of their drowsy negligence; then may they well be applied: when plain declarations will not enlighten people to discern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or persuade them to their duty; then doth reason freely resign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of instruction and reproof.[f]

a "The fanatic, big with pride and full of himself, rejects reason, and takes the emotions of his own passions for those of grace; and, far from conducting himself with Christian modesty and love, he follows the reveries of his imaginations as if they were the inspirations of the Divine Spirit: he imitates the follies of enthusiastic fools, and, if occasion offer, the cruelties of bloody persecutors."—*J. Fletcher.*

b 1 Ki. xxii. 15; Job xii. 2, xxxviii. 5; Eze. xxviii. 3; Zec. xi. 13; Mk. vi. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 9.

c "The custom of inflicting gashes on their limbs, in their relig. exercises, was common among the Carians, the Syrians, and the Phrygians."—*Spk Com.*

d 1 Sa. xviii. 10; 1 Ki. xxii. 12.

e H. Melvill, B.D.

"Satan is subtle: he will make a man proud that he is not proud."—*Brooks.*

f Barrow.

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Elijah repairs the old altar

a 1 Ki. xix. 10.

b "By this action he calls to remembrance the number of the tribes, their real unity in God's sight, and the sin of their separation."—*Keil.*

c "It was like a furrow round the altar, of such a circumference that two measures of seed might be sown in it."—*Wordsworth.*

d Where was this water obtained from in time of drought?

"Fr. the sea."—*M. Henry, Blunt, Kitto.*

"Fr. an abundant and perennial fountain near at hand."—*Vandeeelde, Tristram.*

"Fr. permanent sources of Kishon, particularly the fountain of *Suarlish*."—*Thomson*; this also *Kitto* suggests.

v. 30. *J. Brogden, M.A.*, ii. 138.

"Heaven's gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees."—*Webster.*

"More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of."—*Tennyson.*

e Dr. Tristram.

Elijah's prayer:

30–35. (30) **come,** *etc.*, by this directing the attention of the people away fr. the priests to himself. **repaired,** *etc.*, an ancient altar, used before the temple was built. **broken down,** by Ahab, or during his reign.[a] **twelve stones,** therein asserting Jehovah's claim to His whole people.[b] (32) **trench,**[c] or ditch; to contain water, and prove there was no deception. **measures,** *seahs*, about 3 gallons each. (33) **fill,** *etc.*,[d] this was addressed to attendants; the barrels were buckets, or pitchers. (34) **second time,** *etc.*, making assurance doubly sure. (35) **ran round,** quite flooding it.

The old altar repaired (*v.* 30).—I. The original erecters little thought of the good turn it would serve in the future. A hint for builders of sanctuaries, etc. II. The prophet repairing the old altar. A type of those who would restore to their primitive uses the buildings of the past. III. The whole a type of the certain restoration of the true, and overthrow of the false.

Water at Carmel (*v.* 33).—During my travels I was in the habit of collecting carefully the many species of small fresh-water shells which inhabit the streams, fountains, and wells of Palestine. Now, among the best ascertained and most universally acknowledged sites of scenes of deep Scriptural interest, there is none more unanimously accepted than the site of Elijah's sacrifice at the east end of Mount Carmel. This spot was first brought to the notice of English readers by the Rev. G. Williams, and has been admirably described both by him and by Dean Stanley. The name of the place is El Moharakah, "the place of burning." There is the rocky platform standing out in front of the ridge, there is the gently sloping place below, with the sides of the hill gently spreading down to the plain, and washed by the Kishon as it winds round the mountain's base. On its bank, full in view, is the artificial-looking knoll, or mound, Tell Kassis, "the mound of the priests," where Elijah slew the prophets of Baal. Close by the place of sacrifice, shaded by a noble old tree, by a rock on which the king may have sat, is a large natural cistern of sweet water, which the people of the neighbourhood say is never exhausted. One traveller remarks that in a very dry season he found it nearly dry (probably from having been largely drawn upon), but all others, at all times of the year, have found it full. The existence of this well at once solves any difficulty as to the copious supply of water at hand for Elijah, wherewith to drench the altar and its sacrifice. My search for shells illustrated the permanence of the fountain in another way. It is well known that there are many species of pluviatila molluscs which can survive a long drought, buried in the mud at the bottom of pools. But this is not the case with all species. Especially the well-known genus *Neritina*, of which very pretty group of fresh-water shells one species is found in our English ruins, is very sensitive to removal from water, and only exists in permanent streams and pools. I found *Neritina Michonii*, the species common in the Kishon and neighbouring streams, in this fountain only of the neighbourhood. The inference is plain, viz., that when the other pools and fountains of the district are dry, the fountain of Elijah, fed by the drainage of the limestone cliffs which tower above it, continues to afford a supply, as it did during the three years of drought.[e]

36–40. (36) **at the time,** three o'clock. **Abraham,** *etc.*,

the most solemn form of address to God.[a] As such He is God of the promises. (37) **turned**, *etc.*, used this scene to persuade them to return to Thee. (38) **the fire**, not mere lightning: the people saw it descend. Comp. fire on Sodom; fiery cloud: fire in holy of holies, etc. Its Div. and mirac. character is seen in its burning up everything. (39) **the Lord**, better Jehovah. (40) **take**, seize: lay hands boldly on the deceivers. **Kishon**, now called *Nahr Mukatta*, the torrent of slaughter.

The prophet's hour of triumph (*v.* 36).—I. The conflict between Jehovah and Baal 1. The falling of the Jews into idolatry; 2. The trial employed. The priests of Baal were unquestionably sincere; but sincerity must yield to truth. II. The manifestation of Jehovah. 1. He is addressed as Jehovah; 2. Elijah prays for Him to show His power; 3. He prays also for a public manifestation of the fact that he was His servant; 4. And also that it might be shown for whose glory all this was done.[b]

The trial of an idol.—Rufinus says that the Chaldæans, who adored fire, carried their god into several countries, to try his power over the gods of other nations. He baffled the images of brass, gold, silver, wood, or of whatever other material they were formed, testifying his power by reducing them to dust; and thus his worship was almost everywhere established. But when he was brought to Egypt, the priest of Canopus thought of a stratagem which succeeded in evincing the superiority of the god whom he served. The jars in which the Egyptians were wont to purify the water of the Nile, having been perforated on all sides with small imperceptible holes, he took one of them, stopped the holes with wax, and fitted to the jar's mouth the head of an idol. When the Chaldæan priests applied their fire to this strange idol, the heat, of course, melted the wax; and the water, flowing out, extinguished the fire, giving Canopus the victory over the god of the Chaldæans.

41—46. (41) **up, eat**, *etc.*, i.e. to the sacrificial feast, wh. always followed on a sacrifice. **sound**, a change of wind. "The sound of the tread of rain."[a] (42) **top**, to a point fr. whence the sea was visible. **face . . knees**, the "Oriental attitude of complete abstraction."[b] (43) **servant**, poss. the widow of Zarephath's son.[c] (44) **little cloud**, "such a cloud is often the forerunner of a violent storm." **hand**, *caph*, the palm of the hand. (45) **and wind**, wh. drove the clouds. **Jezreel**, Zerin;[d] poss. Ahab's summer residence. (46) **girded**,[e] so as to run freely. This done as sign of loyalty.

The conquest of faith.—This passage—I. Indicates the bent of a good man's mind. Both Ahab and Elijah "went up," but how different their purposes! One "went up" to eat and drink, the other to pray. Learn, respecting a good man, that he possesses—1. An earnest; 2. A humble; 3. A devout, spirit. II. Exemplifies the power of a good man's faith. Consider—1. Elijah's confidence: no indications of rain; 2. His patience: "seven times;" 3. His perseverence. III. Records the success of a good man's prayer. Here there is—1. A visible indication of God's purposes; 2. A special warning for the king's preparation; 3. A direct answer to a particular request. IV. Reveals the source of a good man's strength (*v.* 46). 1. God imparts strength to the good man for the performance of the most arduous duties; 2. The resources of infinite strength are within the reach of a good man.[f]

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priests of Baal destroyed

a Ex. iii. 6, 15, 16, iv. 5.

v. 36. *J. S. M. Anderson*, 50; *C. P. Eden*, 121.

v. 39. *C. Bullen*, 153.

b H. Bower

"As idle and slothful soldiers lying in camp allow the enemy to plunder the country, burn the villages, ravish the women, and produce general havoc: so in spiritual warfare, if we yield to the flesh and the devil, we shall be in perpetual misery; but if we resist them stoutly, we shall the sooner attain rest." — *Cawdray.*

Elijah runs before Ahab to Jezreel

a LXX.

b Stanley.

c Also identified by some with the prophet Jonah.

d Jos. xix. 18.

e "In Persia it is at this day regarded as a piece of necessary state for the king and great nobles to have several men to run before and behind them as they ride out on horseback. This they do even when the rider puts his horse to a gallop. These men are called *shatirs*."—*Kitto.*

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vv. 42–44. *R. P. Buddicom.* i. 91; *A. Roberts*, vi. 122.

f J. Woodhouse.

"Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest: prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts: it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

g Thomson.

Running before the chariot (*v.* 46).—Elijah, as God's minister, had overwhelmed the king with shame and confusion in the presence of his subjects. The natural tendency of this would be to lower him in their eyes. The prophet was therefore Divinely directed to give a testimony of respect and honour to the king, as public and striking as from necessity had been the opposition and rebuke to his idolatry. The mode of doing honour to Ahab, by running before his chariot, was in accordance with the customs of the East even to this day. I was reminded of this incident more than twenty years ago at Jaffa, when Mohammed Ali came to that city with a large army to quell the rebellion of Palestine. The camp was on the sandhill south of the city, while Mohammed Ali stopped inside the walls. The officers were constantly going and coming, preceded by runners, who always kept just ahead of the horses, no matter how furiously they were ridden; and in order to run with the greater ease, they not only "girded their loins" very tightly, but also tucked up their loose garments under the girdle, lest they should be incommoded by them. Thus, no doubt, did Elijah. The distance from the base of Carmel, across the plain to Jezreel, is not less than twelve miles; and the race was probably accomplished in two hours, in the face of a tremendous storm of rain and wind. It was necessary that "the hand of the Lord" should be upon the prophet, or he would not have been able to achieve it.*g*

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 906.

Ahab tells Jezebel; Elijah in the wilderness

1—4. (1) **told Jezebel,** this shows that she had taken no part in the Carmel scene, and prob. disapproved of it. **slain,** *etc.*, ch. xviii. 40. (2) **so let,** *etc.*, this oath reveals the haughty spirit of the queen.*a* By sending this message she may have intended to drive him from the kingdom.*b* (3) **he saw,** either perceived the intention of the queen, or perhaps it should be he *feared.*[c] **Beersheba,**[d] Ge. xxi. 14, 95 miles fr. Jezreel. (4) **juniper,** Heb. *rothem*, a species of broom.[e] **requested,** *etc.*, the prayer of utter depression.*f* **better,** any more able to recover the people: my work, too, is a failure.

Elijah (*v.* 4).—I. The cause of Elijah's despondency. 1. Relaxation of physical strength; 2. Want of sympathy; 3. Want of occupation: 4. Disappointment in the expectation of success. II. God's treatment of it. 1. He recruited Elijah's exhausted strength; 2. He calmed his stormy mind by the healing influence of Nature; 3. He made him feel the earnestness of life; 4. He assured him of victory.*g*

The juniper (*v.* 4).—The juniper is mentioned more than once in our translation of the Scriptures: but the opinions of learned men are much divided concerning the shrub or tree to which the inspired writers allude. The gadha or gadhat, a species of tree very like the tamarisk, which grows in the sandy deserts, resembles, in more than one instance, the juniper in our translation. It flourishes in the burning wild: its wood is extremely proper to burn into charcoal, which has the property of long retaining fire, on which account it is carried into the cities and sold for fuel. The camel is very fond of its leaves, although they frequently affect him with pains in his bowels; and under its

a "With one of those tremendous vows wh. mark the history of the Semitic race, both within and without the Jewish pale—the vow of Jephthah, the vow of Saul, the vow of Hannibal—she sent a messenger to Elijah."—*Stanley.* 1 Ki. xx. 10; 2 Ki vi 31.

b "That he might not gain an ascendency over Ahab." — *Words worth*

c As LXX., and other ancient versions.

d Not prob. Jezebel's threat alone, but, in part, physical reaction fr. the over-excitement

shade the wolf so commonly lurks that it has become a proverb among the Arabs, "The wolf is near the gadha." But from these circumstances it cannot be determined with certainty whether the gadha of the roving Arab be the same with the juniper. The Hebrew word for the plant to which we give the name of juniper is *rothem*, from the verb *ratham*, to bind or tie, on account of the toughness or tenacity of its twigs. In Parkhurst it is the genista or Spanish broom, which eminently possesses the character of tenacity. So great is their flexibility that the Italians still weave them into baskets. The genista, it must be granted, affords but a poor shelter to the weary traveller from the intense heat of an Oriental sky; while the prophet Elijah, exhausted with a long and precipitate flight, found a refreshing shade under the spreading branches of the rothem. But the remark applies with equal, if not greater, force to the juniper, which in this country never rises above the stature of a humble shrub.[h]

5—8. (5) **slept,** in the exhaustion of mental strain and bodily fatigue. **eat,**[a] this ans. to his prayer shows how much his depression was physical. (6) **cake baken,** not a fire and the cake baking, but a cake such as was usually baked among embers. **head,** Heb. *bolster*. (7) **journey,** wh. Elijah had designed, but failed as yet to accomplish. He was fleeing for safety to the desert district of Sinai. (8) **forty days,**[b] *etc.*, it did not take him this time to reach Horeb, but for this time he wandered about the granite hills. **Horeb,** Ex. iii. 1.

Elijah: thoughts on life (*v.* 8).—This incident suggests—I. An undesirable possibility in human life. Were men to continue here without food a disastrous inactivity would ensue. II. The supporting element of all life. The will of God kept Elijah alive. III. The Divine care of a godly life. That God takes care of His people *individually* is—1. Accordant with reason; 2. Taught by Scripture; 3. Attested by the experience of the good.[c]

The sanctuary in Horeb (*v.* 8).—In the Sinai mountains, where the ascent to the higher peak of Mount Sinai commences from a little plain, which lies 1,200 or 1,300 feet above the lower valleys, is a low rude building containing the chapels of Elijah and Elisha. "Here," says Robinson, "was evidently once a small monastery, and the older travellers speak also of a chapel to the Virgin. In that of Elijah the monks show near the altar a little hole, just large enough for a man's body, which they say is the cave where the prophet dwelt in Horeb. Tapers are lighted and incense burnt in these chapels." This is a fair specimen of local tradition. Jewish writers are of opinion that the cave in which Elijah lodged was the same with the cleft in the rock in which Moses was put when the Lord passed before him; but were this the case there had been no need that Elijah should go forth to stand upon the mount while the Lord passed by.[d]

9—14. (9) **a cave,** the cave one well known.[a] **word . . him,** in a night vision. **doest thou,** *etc.*,[b] intending to convict him of wilfulness. (10) **very jealous,**[c] or earnest: this is said in tone of reproach that God had not followed his zeal and service with adequate successes. (11) **mount,** out in the open air. (12) **fire,** as lightning. **still small voice,**[d] *a sound of soft stillness*, gentle blowing, or soft murmur, a sign of the nearness of God.

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of the preceding day, produced this extraordinary change."—*Spk. Com.*

d Jos. xix. 2.

e Genista monosperma, which abounds in the Sinaitic peninsula.

f Nu. xi. 15; Jno. iv. 3; Matt. xxvi. 39.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*; also *A. Fuller, Wks.* 507.

g F. W. Robertson, M.A.

h Paxton.

Elijah under the juniper

a Ge. xxi. 15—19.

b De. ix. 9, 18; Mat. iv. 2.

vv. 4—8. *T. Laurie, Elijah in the Wild. Lect.* 79.

c Dr. Thomas.

d Kitto.

"God pledges Himself that there will not be one redundant thorn in the believer's chaplet of suffering. No burden too heavy will be laid on him, and no sacrifice too great exacted from him. He will 'temper the wind to the shorn lamb.' Whenever the need be' has accomplished its end, then the rod is removed, the chastisement suspended, the furnace quenched."—*Macduff.*

the still small voice

a "There is nothing to confirm, but there is nothing to contradict, the belief that it may have been in that se-

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cluded basin, wh. has been long pointed out as the spot, beneath the summit of what is called 'The Mount of Moses.'" — *Stanley.*

b See *Keble*, Cn. Year. 9th Sun. after Triuity.

c "This is the first place, I believe, in the Bib. where any one is introduced as using the words, 'Lord God of Hosts.'" — *Wordsworth.* Comp. 2 Sa. v. 10.

d "The acted parable is, in fact, a condemnation of that *zeal* which Elijah had glorified in." — *Spk. Com.*

e Ex. iii. 6, xxxiii. 18, 19.

v. 9. *F. F. Clarke*, 47; *R. W. Evans*, 1. 52; *Dr. W. Wilson*, 55.

f S. Martin.

Elijah is sent to anoint Hazael

a 2 Ki. x. 32, 33, xiii. 3.

b Job xxxi. 27; Ho. xiii. 2.

vv. 13—18. *J. H. Gurney*, 207.

v. 16. *H. Blunt, Elisha.*

v. 18. *A. Roberts*, vi. 140.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"In the great hand of God I stand." — *Shakespeare.*

d Roberts.

Elijah casts his mantle over Elisha

a "I have seen more than a dozen of them

(13) **mantle**,[e] Elij.'s characteristic garment. (14) **he said**, comp. *v.* 10.

A question from God (*v.* 9).—We may consider this question as addressed to—I. The deceiver in the cave of hypocrisy. II. The notable sinner in the cave of supposed secrecy. III. The penitent sinner in the cave of despair. IV. The converted sinner in the cave of non-confession. V. The godly in the cave of luxurious retirement and easy seclusion. VI. The godly in the cave of misanthropy and disgust.[f]

What doest thou here, Elijah? (*v.* 9).—A handbill, with the title, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" came into the hands of a German reformed clergyman in Maryland, who was so much pleased with it that he determined to translate it into German, for the benefit of a part of his congregation. He had only commenced translating it when he was called out, and Mr. Elijah, coming in during his absence, was so much struck with the title that he took it up and carried it away with him. The clergyman came in, and learning from his wife that he had taken it, went in pursuit of him, being desirous to finish the translation. As he passed a certain house he saw him, through an open window, engaged with some ungodly associates in a game of chance. The clergyman, thrusting his hand into the window, gently struck Elijah on the shoulder, saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It proved a "word in season," and was the means of calling him from the devious paths of sin and folly into the "narrow way" that leads to the New Jerusalem, where he afterwards hoped to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Elijah the prophet, around their Father's throne.

15—18. (15) **go, return**, we are left to assume that the vision had humbled the soul of Elij., and prepared him to execute new prophetic commissions. **Damascus**, Ge. xiv. 15. **Hazael**, *whom God beholds or cares for.* (16) **Jehu**, *Jehovah is he.* **Nimshi**, *drawn out, saved.* **Elisha**, *God is salvation.* **Shaphat**, *judge.* **Abel-meholah**, Ju. vii. 22, "*field of the dance.*" (17) **sword of Hazael**, 2 Ki. viii. 28, 29.[a] **sword of Jehu**, 2 Ki. ix. 24, 27, 33, x. 1—7, 18—25. (18) **I have left**, marg. *I will leave.* **kissed**,[b] idolaters did sometimes kiss the hands of their idols.

A remnant in the worst of times (*v.* 18).—Show—I. That in the worst of times God has an elect people in the world. II. That the number of these elect far exceeds all that the most sanguine of God's saints would imagine. Improvement:—Let your religion be such that God—(1) May Himself bear witness to it; (2) May be glorified by it.[c]

Kissing the idol (*v.* 18).—Things which have been sent to the temples to be presented to idols, are, when returned, kissed by the people. Should a priest give areca nuts, betel leaves, or cakes, which have been presented to the gods, the person receiving them kisses them. When a devotee has touched the feet of a priest he kisses his hands.[d]

19—21. (19) **twelve yoke**, *i.e.* twelve ploughs were working in the field, each with its yoke of oxen.[a] **passed by**, better, crossed over to him. **cast his mantle**, "this is explained as constituting a species of adoption, bec. a father naturally clothes his children."[b] (20) **let me**, *etc.*, comp. Lu. ix. 61, 62.[c] **go**

back, *etc.*, indic. reproach; if Elisha felt so strongly the earthly ties he was unfit for the higher call. (21) **back,** only to the oxen, not to his home. **ministered,** Ex. xxiv. 13; Jos. i. 1; 2 Ki. iii. 11.

Call of Elisha to the prophetic office (*v.* 21).—In this appointment of Elisha to the prophetic office there are two things to be noticed. I. His peculiar call. II. His prompt obedience. Conclude with a few words—(1) Of inquiry; (2) Of advice.

Elijah's mantle (*v.* 19).—When Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha the act was symbolic, intimating that the latter should succeed him in the prophetical office. The garment was also bequeathed by its original owner in accordance with a custom still prevalent in the East. "A reputed saint," says Kitto, "when departing from life, indicates his successor by bequeathing to him his mantle, the symbol of his spiritual power; and although that mantle may be dirty, patched, tattered, or threadbare, it is deemed to be of higher price than the brocaded robes of kings, and the older it is the more precious it becomes."

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thus at work."—*Thomson.*

b Spk. Com.

2 Ki. ii. 13.

c Mat. xix. 27, 29.

v. 19. *J. S. M. Anderson*, 84.

v. 20. *Dr. J. Burton* (1759). "Leave not off praying to God; for either praying will make thee leave off sinning, or continuing in sin will make thee desist from praying."—*Fuller.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

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Benhadad sends a message to Ahab

1—6. (1) **Benhadad,** "son of that Benhadad under whom the Aramæan kingdom had attained such power,"[a] *see v.* 34. **kings,** feudal kings, not allies, *v.* 24. (2) **messengers,** ambassadors offering peace on most insulting terms. (3) **mine,** within my power. (4) **I am thine,**[b] intimating that he was willing to become tributary. (5) **again,**[c] with a more arrogant message. (6) **pleasant,** desirable. **thine eyes,** LXX., Syr. and Vulg. read *their* eyes.

The folly of fear.—

Who would believe what strange bugbears
Mankind creates itself, of fears,
That spring like fern, that insect weed,
Equivocally, without seed,
And have no possible foundation,
But merely in th' imagination?
And yet can do more dreadful feats
Than hags, with all their imps and teats;
Make more bewitch and haunt themselves
Than all their nurseries of elves.
For fear does things so like a witch,
'Tis hard t' unriddle which is which.[d]

a Ewald.

b "The ans. was beyond measure tame and submissive, even to abjectness—furnishing another illus. of the yielding temper of this king to any force put upon him from without."—*Kitto.*

c Ex. xv. 9; Is. x. 13, 14.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

d Butler.

Ahab's reply to Benhadad

7—12. (7) **elders,** forming his council, Ex. iii. 16. **seeketh mischief,** an occasion for sacking and plundering the town, wh. he could not do if Ahab submitted to his exactions. (8) **people,**[a] who seem to have been present at the consultation. (9) **I may not,** left to himself he would have yielded this. (10) **dust,** *etc.*,[b] of the city when reduced to ruins: a strong figure of the utter desolation he would bring on it. (11) **girdeth,** *etc.*, a proverb, full of point for all boasters. (12) **pavilions,** tents. **set,**[c] *etc.*, marg. *place the engines.*

Against self-confidence (*v.* 11).—In considering this counsel let us point out—I. The wisdom of it—1. As a political maxim; 2. As a religious theorem. II. Its importance—To those who are—1. Just

a "They prob. signified their approb. or disapprob. by acclamations or murmurs: Jos. ix. 18; Ju. xi. 11."—*Spk. Com.*

b It also boasts of the vast numbers of his army.

c He says no-

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entering on their spiritual course; 2. Going on victorious; 3. Most advanced in the divine life.[d]

Triumphing before the battle (*v.* 11).—Nothing can be got, but much may be lost, by triumphing before a battle. When Charles V. invaded France he lost his generals and a great part of his army by famine and disease, and returned baffled and thoroughly mortified from an enterprise which he began with such confidence of its happy issue that he desired Paul Jovius, the historian, to make a large provision of paper sufficient to record the victories which he was going to acquire.[e]

13—16. (13) **a prophet,** his name unknown. Rab. say Micaiah.[a] **great multitude,** *v.* 10. (14) **young men,**[b] or servants. **princes,** *etc.*, governors of districts. (15) **seven thousand,** not the whole army of Israel, but all then available. (16) **drunk,**[c] his boastful language befitted one who had lost self-control in drink.

Elevation of drunkenness (*v.* 16).—Du Chaillu, in his journey to Ashango Land, called upon the king at Anniambie, and found him drunk, as usual. "Indeed," says the traveller, "he was too tipsy to stand on his legs: nevertheless he was bullying and boasting in a loud tone of voice. I had not been in his place long before he ordered another calabash full of palm-wine, and drank about a half-gallon of it. This finished him up for the day: he fell back into the arms of his loving wives, ejaculating many times, "I am a big king! I am a big king!" The voice soon became inaudible, and he fell asleep.—*The madness of drunkenness.*—Molière, the father of French comedy, being in a delicate state of health, left Paris, and retired to his villa at Auteuil, to pass a short time. One day Boileau, accompanied by Chapelle, Lulli, De Junsac, and Nantouillet, came to visit him. Molière could not join them on account of his illness; but he gave the keys of his house to Chapelle, and begged him to do the honours for him. Chapelle acquitted himself of this task in such a manner that, at supper, not one of them was sober. They began to discuss the most serious matters, and at last, having impiously decided that the greatest good was never to have been born, and the next to die as soon afterwards as possible, they resolved, shocking as the proposition may sound, to go in a body and drown themselves in the Seine. In the meanwhile Molière, who had retired to his chamber, was informed of this state of affairs, and, invalid as he was, he hastened to join the mad party. Seeing how far gone they were he did not attempt to reason them out of their determination, but demanded to know what he had done that they should think of destroying themselves without him. "He is right," cried Chapelle, "we have been unjust towards him: he shall be drowned with us." "One moment if you please, though," observed the dramatist; "this is the last act of our lives, and not to be undertaken rashly; if we drown ourselves at this hour of the night people will say that we are drunk, and we shall lose all merit. Let us wait until morning, and then, in broad daylight and upon empty stomachs, we will throw ourselves into the river in the face of our fellow-creatures." This was, after some demurrer, approved of, and the next morning, bad as the world was allowed to be, no one thought it bad enough to quit it.

17—21. (17) **Benhadad sent,** more correctly, *they sent and*

thing his astonishment and rage are too big for words, and are intimated only in the effects, in the laconic military order given in a single word *Set*, or *Place*.

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

[e] *Bp. Horne.*

a prophet is sent to Ahab

[a] 1 Ki. xxii. 8.

[b] "Their attendants, youths unaccustomed to war."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] Pr. xxx. 4, 5; Ec. x. 16, 17; Ho. iv. 11.

Plutarch says, that Lycurgus prevented drunkenness among the Lacedæmonians by commanding that all their vines should be cut down, and allowing none to grow in the commonwealth. To prevent it here, all the distilleries and beer-breweries must be stopped, and the cider and wine making prohibited.

"It is the reputable Christian wine-drinkers who are the men who send forth from the high places of society, and sometimes even from the portals of the sanctuary, an unsuspected unrebuked, but powerful influence, which is secretly and silently doing on every side—among the young, among the aged, among even females—its work of death."—*Dr. Nott.*

the defeat

told. (18) **alive,** supposing that was easy enough to do. (19) **army,** seven thousand of, *v.* 15. (20) **they slew,** prob. only a few of the Syrians attempted to seize them: these being killed, a general panic ensued.[a] **with the horsemen,** protected by them. (21) **went out,** with the reserve army.

Conquest of drunkenness.—At Babylon, Alexander the Great began the second night's carousal with twenty guests at table. He drank the health of every person at table severally. After this, he called for Hercules' cup, which held an incredible quantity; being filled, he poured it all down, drinking to Proteas, a Macedonian of the company. Afterwards, he pledged him again in the same extravagant bumper, and fell instantly upon the floor. Seneca says, "Here, then, this hero, unconquered by all the toils of prodigious marches, exposed to the dangers of sieges and combats, to the most violent extremes of heat and cold—here he lies subdued by his intemperance, struck to the earth by the fatal cup of Hercules." He was seized with a fever, which terminated in death in a few days, at the age of thirty-eight years.[b]—*Fashionable drinking.*—At an Episcopal convention a discussion on temperance brought up the "wine question." An influential clergyman arose and made a vehement argument in favour of wine. When he had resumed his seat a layman said, "Mr. Moderator, it is not my purpose, in rising, to answer the learned argument you have just listened to. My object is more humble, and, I hope, more practical. I once knew a father in moderate circumstances, who was at much inconvenience to educate a beloved son at college. Here this son became dissipated, but after he had graduated and returned to his father, the influence of home, acting upon a generous nature, actually reformed him. The father was overjoyed at the prospect that his cherished hopes of other days were still to be realised. Several years passed, when, the young man having completed his professional study and being about to leave his father to establish himself in business, he was invited to dine with a neighbouring clergyman distinguished for his hospitality and social qualities. At this dinner wine was introduced, and offered to this young man, who refused; pressed upon him, and again refused. This was repeated, and the young man ridiculed for his peculiar abstinence. The young man was strong enough to overcome appetite, but he could not resist ridicule. He drank and fell, and from that moment became a confirmed drunkard, and long since has found a drunkard's grave. Mr. Moderator," continued the old man, with streaming eyes, "I am that father; and it was at the table of the clergyman who has just taken his seat that his hospitality ruined the son I shall never cease to mourn."

22–27. (22) **the prophet,** same as *v.* 13. **strengthen thyself,** prepare for another siege. **return of year,**[a] usual season for military operations: from spring to autumn. (23) **of the hills,**[b] Palestine being a hilly country. In fighting Israel kept to the hills, wh. made their foes' chariots and horses almost useless. (24) **kings,** who the year before had been first to flee. **captains,** who were likely to obey, and stand fast. (25) **in the plain,** drawing them out to some chosen battle-ground. (26) **Aphek,**[c] 1 Sa. xxviii. 4. Some think this is the mod. *Fik,* east of the Sea of Gennesareth.[d] (27) **presents,** *victualled.*

Flocks of kids (*v.* 27).—A flock of goats is fewer in number

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and flight of Benhadad

a 1 Sa. ii. 3, 4; Ec. ix. 11.

"Those men who destroy a healthful constitution of body by intemperance and an irregular life, do as manifestly kill themselves, as those who hang, or poison, or drown themselves." — *Sherlock.*

b Buck.

In the time of Oliver Cromwell, the magistrates in the north of England punished drunkenness by making them carry what is called the "Drunkard's Cloak." This was a large barrel, with one head out, and a hole in the other, through which the offender was made to put his head, while his hands were drawn through two small holes, one each side. With this he was compelled to march along the public streets.

"Drunkenness is nothing else but a voluntary madness."—*Seneca.*

the prophet again sent to Ahab

a "When the vernal rains are over." — *Wordsworth.*

b "The local power and influence of deities was a fixed principle of ancient polytheism." —

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Jamieson, Spk. Com., etc.

than a flock of sheep, because the former are given to wander and separate, while the latter, more gregarious in their temper, collect into one place. This is the reason, says Bochart, that the sacred writer compares the small army of the Israelites to a flock of goats rather than to a flock of sheep. While seven is always used by the Hebrews to denote a sufficient or complete number, two is constantly employed to signify a few, or very few. Thus the widow woman said to the prophet, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." The phrase is used in the same sense by the prophet concerning the reduced state of his people: "Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it; as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough." Another prophet uses it in relation to the return of a small number of the captives to their own land: "I will take you; one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." And Hosea encourages his people to repentance with the promise, "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight," or, within a very short time he will deliver them from their enemies. The sacred historian accordingly compares the armies of Israel opposed to the Syrians to "two little flocks of kids;" two, because they were few in number; little flocks, as goats from their roaming disposition always are; flocks of kids, feeble and timid, without resources and without hope. A more complete and glowing picture of national weakness, even the pen of inspiration never drew.[c]

[a] 1 Sa. xxix. 1.

[d] *Vandevelde, Stanley, Thomson.*

[v. 23. *S. Dry'ing, Dii montium observ.* 3.]

Promise and performance, bearing and doing, and indissolubly linked together; only thus do they secure the blessing. William Jay, of Bath, used quaintly to say that Christ's sheep were marked in the ear and the foot. "They hear My voice, and follow Me."

[c] *Paxton.*

Benhadad is again defeated

28–30. (28) **man of God,** not the prophet of *v.* 22, **because,** *etc.*,[a] the triumph was to be not for Ahab's sake, but in vindication of God as the one living God of the whole earth. (29) **battle was joined,** the engagement took place. (30) **a wall,**[b] prop. the wall of the town; no doubt by earthquake.

God of the hills (*v.* 28).—That there were many gods who had each their particular charge and jurisdiction, that some presided over whole countries, while others had but particular places under their tuition and government, and were some of them gods of the woods, others of the rivers, and others of the mountains, was plainly the doctrine of all heathen nations. Pan was reckoned the god of the mountains, for which reason he was styled *Oreibátēs, mountain traverser;* and in like manner, the Syrians might have a conceit that the god of Israel was a god of the mountains, because Canaan, they saw, was a mountainous land; the Israelites delighted to sacrifice on high places; their law, they might have heard, was given on the top of a mountain; their temple stood upon a famous eminence, as did Samaria, where they had so lately received a signal defeat: for their further notion was, that the gods of the mountains had a power to inject a panic fear into any army, whenever they pleased. Nay, that they did not only assist with their influence, but actually engaged themselves in battle in behalf of their favourites, is a sentiment as old as Homer.[c]

[a] 2 Ki. xix. 35.

[b] Is. xxiv. 18; Am. v. 19.

To cut off the top of the dock does no good: its root must be eradicated. Sin is the dock-root. "If," writes Adam, "I grapple with sin in my own strength, the devil knows he may go to sleep."

"A rational nature admits of nothing but what is serviceable to the rest of mankind." — *Antoninus.*

[c] *Stackhouse.*

Ahab makes a covenant

31–34. (31) **sackcloth,** *etc.*, signs of humiliation. "in deep mourning, and with fawning words."[a] (32) **yet alive Ahab**

did not know but he may have fallen in the engagement. **my brother,** I will treat him as such. (33) **observe,**[b] augured, divined, took as an omen any favourable word. (34) **cities,** these were Benhadad's own conditions of peace. **street,** an Israelite quarter, for carrying on trade.

The etiquette of submission (*v.* 31).—The vanquished foe, in testimony of his submission, hung his sword from his neck, when he came into the presence of his conqueror. When Bagdat was taken by the Turks, in the year 1638, the governor's lieutenant and principal officer was sent to the grand vizier, with a scarf about his neck, and his sword wreathed in it, which is accounted by them a mark of deep humiliation and perfect submission, to beg for mercy in his own and his master's name. His request being granted, the governor came and was introduced to the grand seignior, and obtained, not only a confirmation of the promise of life that had been made him, but also various presents of considerable value. These circumstances forcibly recall to our minds the message of Benhadad, after his signal defeat, to the king of Israel. The servants of Benhadad succeeded in obtaining a verbal assurance that his life should be spared; but a surer pledge of protection was to deliver a banner into the hand of the suppliant. In the year 1099, when Jerusalem was taken by the crusaders, about three hundred Saracens got upon the roof of a very lofty building, and earnestly begged for quarter, but could not be induced by any promise of safety to come down, till they had received the banner of Tancred, one of the chief of the crusaders, as a pledge of life. This they reckoned a more powerful protection than the most solemn promise; although in this instance their confidence was entirely misplaced; for the faithless zealots who pretended to fight for the cross, put every man of them to the sword.[c]

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with Benhadad

a Ewald.

b "By the Oriental law of *dukheel*, 'if two enemies meet and exchange the *salam aleikum* even by mistake, there is peace bet. them, and they will not fight. If a man be pursued by an enemy, or even be on the ground, he can save his life by calling out '*dukheel*.'"—*Layard.*

vv. 33. 34. *Crit. Sac. Thes.* i. 494.

"The gift of prayer may have praise from men; but it is the grace of prayer that has power with God."—*Dyer.*

c Paxton.

35—38. (35) **in the word,** *etc.*, prophetically directed of God to act this parable. (36) **voice of the Lord,** wh. as a fellow prophet he ought to have recognised. (37) **wounded,** seriously hurt him. (38) **waited,** with the appearance of a wounded soldier. **ashes,** more correctly, *with a head-band over his eyes.*

The prophet's disguise (*v.* 38).—It is certainly difficult to conceive how the prophet could disguise himself by spreading ashes over his face, as the text imports. But it would be a very easy matter for a transcriber to mistake *aphaD*, a *fillet*, or *bandage*, for *aphaR*, *dust*, the former of which was probably the original reading. Montanus and Houbigant have so rendered the text, and they are supported by the Vatican copy of the LXX. and the Chaldee.[a]

the disobedient prophet

As a mariner loses sight of a harbour by letting his vessel drift with the currents, so do backsliders lose sight of the ever-beaming lantern on Mount Calvary.

a Carpenter.

39—43. (39) **went out,** this story is not to be regarded as untrue; it is an apologue.[a] (40) **so thy judgment,** as conditions fixed, *v.* 39. (41) **he hasted,** *i.e.* made a hurried movement, showing himself to be a well-known prophet. (42) **appointed,** lit. *a man of my curse.* (43) **heavy,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xxi. 4;[b] not repentant, but sullen.

Neglect of duty (*vv.* 39, 40).—Consider—I. The charge: strict, but plain and straightforward, involving a duty on the soldier to himself, and a duty to another. II. The excuse: slender, "busy here and there." III. The sentence: self-pronounced.[c]

the prophet's message to Ahab

a Comp. 2 Sa. xii. 1—4, xiv. 5—11.

b "A few years after, Ahab met his death in battle with the very king whom he thus befriended, and

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under the orders of that king to his soldiers to aim their weapons exclusively against the life of the man who had spared his own."—*Kitto.*
c J. M. Randall.
d Dr. Ferguson.

Duty and death.—It was while standing on the poop of his vessel, amid the heat and the fire of severe combat, that Nelson received his mortal wound; and on being afterwards assured that the day was in favour of his country's flag, he breathed out his spirit with the words in his lips, "Thank God! I have done my duty!" It is to him who is faithful until death, that there is held out the crown of glory.[d]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Naboth refuses to sell Ahab his vineyard

1—4. (1) **Naboth,** *fruit produce.*[a] **Jezreel,**[b] ch. xviii. 45, 46. **hard by,** on the E. slope of the hill.[c] (2) **garden of herbs,** as distinct from a park of trees. **money,** lit. *silver*, not meaning *coin*, but a weight of silver.[d] (3) **the Lord,** Jehovah whom Naboth worshipped. **forbid,** appealing to the Mosaic law.[e] (4) **heavy,** *etc.*, as ch. xx. 43. **bed,** or couch. "Such traits of childish forwardness as these in Ahab show the moral weakness of his character."[f]

A king in a pet (*v.* 4).—I. A picture of royal misery. 1. Ahab in retirement neglects public duties; 2. The subject of a profound grief; 3. Ahab fasting. II. The occasion of this great grief. 1. What, beholding him thus, might one suppose it to be? national disaster, etc.; 2. What was the true cause? a poor garden of herbs; 3. He ought rather to have rejoiced in a subject who venerated the laws of his country and loved his little patrimony; 4. Beware of covetousness: Naboth would keep the law, while Ahab broke the commandment; 5. A word on unreasonable grief.

One law for rich and poor.—In the reign of Frederick, King of Prussia, was a mill near Potsdam, which interfered with a view from the windows of Sans Souci. Annoyed by this inconvenience to his favourite residence, the king sent to inquire the price for which the mill would be sold by the owner. "For no price," was the reply of the sturdy Prussian; and, in a moment of anger, Frederick gave orders that the mill should be pulled down. "The king may do this," said the miller, quietly folding his arms, "but there are laws in Prussia;" and forthwith he commenced proceedings against the monarch, the result of which was that the court sentenced Frederick to rebuild the mill, and to pay besides a large sum of money as compensation for the injury he had done. The king was mortified, but had the magnanimity to say, addressing himself to his courtiers, "I am glad to find that just laws and upright judges exist in my kingdom." A few years ago the head of the honest miller's family, who had in due course of time succeeded to the hereditary possession of his little estate, finding himself, after a long struggle with losses occasioned by the war, which brought ruin into many a house besides his own, involved in pecuniary difficulties that had become insurmountable, wrote to the then King of Prussia, reminding him of the refusal experienced by Frederick the Great at the hands of his ancestors, and stating that if His Majesty now entertained a similar desire to obtain possession of the property, it would be very agreeable to him, in his present embarrassed circumstances, to sell the mill. The king immediately wrote,

a Fr. Heb. *nûb*, to sprout, germinate (*Gesenius*).

b "The palace was situated on the heights at the western extremity of Mt Gilboa, on the E. borders of the plain of Esdraelon, and about 25 m. N. of Samaria. It was the Windsor of Israel. It is a fine site for a town, and commands a wide and noble view."—*Kitto.*

c Stanley. Comp. 2 Ki. ix. 30—36; 1 Ki. xxi 1, 19, 23.

d "The first coin known to the Jews was the Persian *daric*, with wh. they became acquainted during the captivity."—*Spk. Com.*

e Le. xxv. 23; Nu. xxxvi. 7; Eze. xlvi. 18.

f Wordsworth.

Bp. Hall, Cont.

vv. 2, 3. *W. Snowdon*, ii. 20; *C. Kingsley Ser. for Times*, 164.

vv. 3, 4. *G. W. Lewis*, ii. 174.

v. 4. *J. Fawcett*, ii. 1; *Bp. Mant*, ii. 91.

with his own hand, the following reply :—"MY DEAR NEIGHBOUR,—I cannot allow you to sell the mill ; it must remain in your possession as long as one member of your family exists, for it belongs to the history of Prussia. I lament, however, to hear that you are in circumstances of embarrassment, and therefore send you six thousand dollars to arrange your affairs, in the hope that this sum will be sufficient for the purpose. Consider me always your affectionate neighbour, FREDERICK WILLIAM."

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"In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up that makes us rich." —*Beecher*

5—10. (5) **Jezebel,** ch. xvi. 31. (6) **I spake,** *etc.*, as *v.* 2. (7) **dost thou,** *etc.*, intimating that as king he need have no scruples about taking what he wanted. **I will give thee,** let me manage the affair, I have no scruples. (8) **his seal,** or signet ring, wh. he must have lent her for the purpose.[a] **elders . . nobles,** the civic authorities of Jezreel.[b] (9) **a fast,** as if some public calamity had happened. **on high,** or forward as the criminal. (10) **sons of Belial,** De. xiii. 13. The law required two witnesses.[c] **blaspheme,** the word used means *bless*, poss. in sense of giving *parting salutation*.[d]

An evil counsellor.—This history shows Jezebel in her true colours. She—I. Reminds us of what a true wife ought to have done. 1. Expostulated with him ; 2. Congratulated him on having such a subject. II. Reminds us of the pitilessness of a heathen heart. To her Naboth's life and the happiness of his family was as nothing when weighed in the balance against her husband's injustice.

Oriental love of gardens.—Our first parents had for their residence a beautiful garden, which may have had some influence upon their immediate descendants in imparting to them a strong predilection for the best emblems of paradise. People in England will scarcely be able to appreciate the value which the Orientals attach to a garden. The food of many of them consists of vegetables, roots, and fruits ; many of their medicines, also, being indigenous, are produced in their gardens. Here they have their fine fruit trees, and constant shade ; and here they have their wells and places for bathing. See the proprietor, in his undress, walking around his little domain. His fence or wall is high enough to prevent any one from overlooking him. He strolls about to smoke his cheroot, to pick up the fruit, and cull the flowers. He cares not for the world : his soul is satisfied with the scenes around him. Ahab wished to have Naboth's garden ; but how could he part with "the inheritance" of his "fathers?" There was scarcely a tree which had not some pleasing associations connected with it : one was planted by the hand of a beloved ancestor, another in memory of some great event. The water which he drank, and the fruit which he tasted, were from the same sources as those which refreshed his fathers. How then could he, in disobedience to God's command, and in violation of all those tender feelings, give up his garden to Ahab? To part with such a place is, to the people of the East, like parting with life itself.[e]

Jezebel plots against Naboth's life

a Est. viii. 10; Da. vi. 17.

"In giving validity to documents, names were not in those days, nor are they now in the E., signed by the hand in writing, but impressed by a seal on wh. the name is engraved."—*Kitto.*

b "They would in all likelihood be the creatures, and fit tools of Jezebel."—*Jamieson.*

c Nu. xxxv. 30; De. xvii. 6, xix. 15.

d Comp. trans. *curse*, Job i. 5, ii. 9.

v. 7. *J. H. Gurney, Ser. O. T.* 226.

vv. 9, 10. *Dr. A. Snape*, iii. 329.

v. 10. *J. Weemse, Expos.* i. 157.

"In Eastern lands they talk in flowers, and they tell in a garland their loves and their cares." —*Percival.*

"Lovely flowers are the smiles of God's goodness." —*Wilberforce.*

e *Roberts.*

11—14. (11) **did as,** *etc.*, evidently carrying favour with the queen. (12) **a fast,** *v.* 9. (13) **sat,** as witnesses. They offered no proof, but upon their statement the elders raised an excitement, and without being judged Naboth was carried forth and stoned.[a] (14) **stoned,** the proper death of the blasphemer.[b]

Naboth is slain

a Comp. case of Stephen, Ac. vii. 51—60.

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[b] Ex. xii. 28; De. xiii. 10, xvii. 5; Jno. x. 33.

Fr. 2 Ki. ix. 26, it appears that Naboth's sons were put to death with him. This may have been necessary to remove all title to the inheritance.

vv. 12, 13. *E. Vickeringill, Wks.* i. 270.

"Small causes are sufficient to make a man uneasy, when great ones are not in the way; for want of a block, he will stumble at a straw."—*Swift.*

Elijah is sent to Ahab

a Kitto.

[b] "The more detailed version of the LXX. tells us that immediately the pang of remorse shot through his heart. 'When he heard that Naboth was dead, he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth.'"—*Stanley.*

[c] Ps. ix. 12; Is. xxvi. 21.

[d] 1 Ki. xxii. 38; 2 Ki. ix. 25, 26.

[e] *J. S. Exell.*

vv. 17—19. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* i. 511.

v. 19. *Dr. T. Swadling,* 105; *R. Warner,* iii. 40.

the doom of Ahab and Jezebel

The victim of sycophancy.—I. Always wicked men in the world base enough to act falsely for a price. II. Always vain men at hand whose vanity blinds them to danger. III. Naboth may have regarded his exaltation as a reward for his sturdy resistance of wrong; but the known character of Jezebel should have aroused his suspicions. IV. The fasting of Ahab finds a grim reflection in the fasting of Naboth. Ahab recovers from his grief; Naboth loses his life. V. Does such injustice exist among us?

Great results from small causes.—"If thy foe be small as a gnat fancy him as large as an elephant." That is, make not yourself too secure against even the smallest foe, but provide against him as if he were the largest. We have read in fables of a gnat conquering a lion, and of a mouse setting a lion at liberty when caught in the toils. If by any possibility such small creatures can render service, they can also do mischief. An unwise young miller said to a friend of his, "The water is leaking through my mill-dam, I see, but the hole is only a very little one." "I would try to fancy it a very big one, if I were you," replied his friend, "for it will soon be big enough if it be not attended to." The young miller neglected this advice, and the water broke down the mill-dam. If sin in its beginning be neglected it will gain strength in the same manner. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

15—19. (15) **take possession,** "the estate of Naboth has lapsed to the crown by his execution on the charge of treason, or cursing the king."[a] (16) **heard,** how felt on receiving the tidings is not intimated.[b] **go down,** Jezreel, and certainly the valley, was lower than Samaria. (17) **Tishbite,** ch. xvii. 1. (18) **in Samaria,** poss. limiting kingship of Ahab to that part of the country whose capital was Samaria. **in the vineyard,**[c] and there was to be met. (19) **dogs lick,** this had a twofold fulfilment.[d]

An unwelcome visitor (*v.* 20).—I. The question of Ahab: "*Hast, etc.?*" 1. It indicates past association; 2. It shows that criminal offenders often pass an incorrect judgment on men who rebuke them; 3. It shows disquietude on the part of Ahab; 4. It shows that the gratification of unholy desire never brings tranquillity. II. The response of Elijah. 1. He was Divinely commissioned to seek Ahab; 2. The reasons assigned for the search; 3. How high social position is frequently degraded. Learn:—Ahab's bargain was—(1) Voluntary; (2) Mad.[e]

A faithful servant.—In his stirring history of the civil war, Mr. Chambers mentions that Cumberland, accompanied by Wolfe, rode over the field during the massacre of the wounded. At a place where the latter lay more than usually thick a mutilated Highlander raised himself painfully on one arm, and gave the duke a smile of scorn and defiance. "Wolfe," cried His Highness, "shoot me that Highland scoundrel, who dares to look at us so insolently." "My commission is at the disposal of your Royal Highness," replied the gentle Wolfe, "but I cannot consent to become an executioner."

20—24. (20) **Ahab said,** he being the first to speak. **enemy,** bec. an arouser of conscious. Elij. was the last man Ahab would wish to see, and especially in that spot.[a] **sold thyself, pu**

thyself in the power of a tempter.[b] (21) **shut up and left,** ch. xiv. 10. (22) **like the house,** *etc.*, ch. xv. 29. **Baasha,** ch. xvi. 3, 4, 11. (23) **Jezebel also,** this special prophecy was given on another occasion.[c] **wall,** or ditch. (24) **dogs,** wh. prowl at night about the streets. **fowls,** birds of prey.

Ahab and Elijah in Naboth's vineyard (*v.* 20).—See from these words I. How greedily men commit sin. II. How indignantly they take reproof. They do this—1. However gross and unjustifiable the sin; 2. However gentle and kind the expostulation; 3. Even when God Himself is monitor. III. How certainly they ruin their own souls.[d]

Death of Jezebel (*v.* 23).—Mr. Bruce, when at Gondar, was witness to a scene in a great measure similar to the devouring of Jezebel by dogs. He says,[e] "The bodies of those killed by the sword were hewn to pieces and scattered about the streets, being denied burial. I was miserable, and almost driven to despair, at seeing my hunting dogs, twice let loose by the carelessness of my servants, bringing into the courtyard the heads and arms of slaughtered men, and which I could in no way prevent but by the destruction of the dogs themselves." He also adds, that upon being asked by the king the reason of his dejected and sickly appearance, among other reasons he informed him, "It was occasioned by an execution of three men, which he had lately seen; because the hyenas, allured into the streets by the quantity of carrion, would not let him pass by night in safety from the palace; and because the dogs fled into his house to eat pieces of human carcases at their leisure." This account illustrates also the readiness of the dogs to lick the blood of Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 38); in perfect conformity to which is the expression of the prophet Jeremiah, xv. 3, "I will appoint over them the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear."[f]

25—29. (25) **sell himself,** *v.* 20. **stirred up,**[a] incited, urged beyond even his own evil inclination. (26) **Amorites,** this term represents the old Canaanitish nations, prob. bec. they were the most powerful of the races.[b] (27) **rent,** *etc.*,[c] signs of repentance and humiliation. Chiefly, however, incited by fear of consequences. **lay in sackcloth,** this was an unusual and extreme act. **went softly,**[d] barefoot, and with a pensive manner.[e] (28. 29) **in his days,** removal of penalty there could not be,[f] delay of it there might be.

The feigned repentance of Ahab (*vv.* 27, 29).—In speaking of Ahab's repentance we propose to show—I. What there was in it that was good. 1. A fear of God's judgments; 2. An acknowledgment of God's justice in inflicting them. II. Wherein it was defective. In—1. Its principle; 2. Its measure; 3. Its end. III. What the honour which God put upon it was designed to teach us. 1. That God will not overlook the smallest things that are done for Him; 2. That He will surely receive every penitent.[g]

The lion and the bowman.—A very skilful bowman went to the mountains in search of game. All the beasts of the forest fled at his approach. The lion alone challenged him to combat. The bowman immediately let fly an arrow, and said to the lion, "I send thee my messenger, that from him thou mayest learn what I myself shall be when I assail thee." The lion thus wounded rushed away in great fear, and on a fox exhorting him to be of

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a "There is a solitary figure standing on the deserted ground, as though the dead Naboth had risen fr. his bloody grave, to warn off the king fr. his unlawful gains."—*Stanley.*

b 2 Ki. xvii. 17; Ro. vi. 16, vii. 14. "The metaphor is taken fr. the practice of men's selling themselves into slavery, and so giving themselves up wholly to work the will of their master. This was a widespread custom in the ancient world."—*Spk. Com.*

c 2 Ki. ix. 36.

v. 20. *N. Brady,* iii. 1; *Lord A. Hervey,* ii. 164; *W. Nind,* i. 130.

vv. 20, 21. *F. F. Clark,* 33.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Travels, iv. 81.

f Burder.

Ahab's repentance

a Pr. xxii. 14; Eccl. vii. 26; Mk. vi. 17.

b Ge. xv. 16; 2 Ki. xxi. 11; Eze. xvi. 3; Am. ii. 9, 10.

c Comp. Jno. iii 5.

d "As if he had no heart to go about any business."—*Patrick.*

e Jamieson. Is xxxviii. 15.

f 2 Ki. x 1, 6.

v. 25. *J. Fawcett,* i. 90; *Bp. Heber,* ii. 160; *T. Ainger,* 326; *Dr. H Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 352; *J. S. Williams, Cha. of O. Test.* 232.

v. 27. *R. Southgate,* i. 237.

g C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 27—29. *Bp. Mant,* iii. 251; *J.*

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good courage, and not to run away at the first attack, he said, "You counsel me in vain, for if he sends so fearful a messenger, how shall I abide the attack of the man himself?" If the warning admonitions of God's ministers fill the conscience with terror, what must it be to face the Lord himself? If one bolt of judgment bring a man into a cold sweat, what will it be to stand before an angry God in the last great day?[h]

W. Warter, ii. 493.
vv. 28—29. *J. S. M. Anderson* 104; *W. Reading*, ii. 416.
h Spurgeon.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

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1—4. (1) **three years,** reckoning fr. the defeat of Benhadad, ch. xx. 29—31. They were not, however, three full years.[a] (2) **Jehoshaphat,** ch. xv. 24. For occasion of this visit, see 2 Ki viii. 18; 2 Chr. xviii. 1, 2. (3) **Ramoth in Gilead,** De. iv. 43, prob. taken by Benhadad's father from Omri.[b] **still,** making no effort to regain it. (4) **he said,** prob. during the feast when Jehosh. could not politely refuse, and perhaps, too, was excited with wine.

alliance of Jehoshaphat and Ahab

a "We may conjecture that the pause, which is here noticed, in the war bet. Is. and Syria, was the result of a common danger, viz., the first great Assyrian expedition into these parts." — *Spk. Com.*
b 1 Ki. xx. 34.

The fearful game of war.—The game of war is that in which the full personal power of the human creature is brought out in management of its weapons. And this for three reasons:— First, the great justification of this game is, that it truly, when well played, determines who is the best man; who is the highest bred, the most self-denying, the most fearless, the coolest of nerve, the swiftest of eye and hand. You cannot test these qualities wholly unless there is a clear possibility of the struggles ending in death. It is only in the fronting of that condition that the full trial of the man, soul and body, comes out. You may go to your game of wickets, or of hurdles, or of cards, and any knavery that is in you may stay unchallenged all the while. But, if the play may be ended at any moment by a lance-thrust, a man will probably make up his accounts a little before he enters it. Whatever is rotten and evil in him will weaken his hand more in holding a sword hilt than in balancing a billiard cue; and, on the whole, the habit of living lightly-hearted in daily presence of death always has had, and must have, a tendency both to the making and testing of honest men. But, for the final testing, observe, you must make the issue of battle strictly dependent on fineness of frame and firmness of hand. You must not make it the question, which of the combatants has the longest gun, or which has got behind the biggest tree, or which has the wind in his face, or which has gunpowder made by the best chemists, or iron smelted by the best coal, or the angriest mob at his back. Decide your battle, whether of nations or individuals, on those terms, and you have only multiplied confusion, and added slaughter to iniquity. But, decide your battle by pure trial which has the strongest arm and steadiest heart, and you have gone far to decide a great many matters besides, and to decide them rightly.[c]

"As knowledge without justice ought to be called cunning rather than wisdom; so a mind prepared to meet danger, if excited by its own eagerness and not the public good, deserves the name of audacity rather than of courage." — *Plato.*
"It is good discretion not to make too much of any man at the first; because one cannot hold out that proportion."—*Bacon.*
"'Burke talked of 'that digest of anarchy called the Rights of Man.'"—*Alison.*
c Ruskin.

5—8. (5) **enquire,** as a pious king Jehosh. was unwilling to act without knowing the Div. will. **to day,** at once, before any sort of action is taken. (6) **the prophets,** not of Jehovah, but of Baal.[a] **four hundred,** prob. a sacred number in Ahab's religious system. **the Lord,** not the usual term Jehovah.[b] (7) **of the Lord,** the prophets have spoken of *Adonai* and *Elohim,* but what does *Jehovah* say? (8) **Micaiah,** poss. the prophet

false and true prophets of Israel

a Stanley, Wordsworth.

Spk. Com. prefers the idea that they were prophets

introduced in ch. xx. 41.[c] **hate him,**[d] thinking he prophesied against him fr. personal grudge.

Faithful ministers objects of hatred (*v.* 8).—This saying of Ahab furnishes us with occasion to show—I. The necessity imposed on every faithful minister. A servant of God must declare the truth with fearless and impartial freedom. 1. God requires this; 2. It is of the utmost import to all to whom he speaks; 3. The salvation of souls depends upon it. II. The recompense he must expect for his fidelity. Hatred. This will be—1. Invariable; 2. Universal; 3. Inveterate.[e]

Teachers of falsehood (*v.* 6).—The spirit of falsehood often insinuates itself into those who are appointed to be the messengers of truth only. For instance, Ahab had clergy enough around him, such as they were. Four hundred prophets were reserved from appearing at the time of the challenge made by Elijah. They are consulted by Ahab, whose life they destroy by their dissembling. They care not so much about what God requires, as what Ahab would have them say. They saw which way the king's wishes inclined, and they bend their speech accordingly. "Go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hands of the king." False teachers are intent only to please. A falsehood which flatters for the hour is preferred by them above a stern truth which relates to practical piety and eternal peace.[f]

9—14. (9) **officer,** lit. *eunuch.* (10) **sat,** *etc.*, were sitting, having removed fr. the banquet.[a] (10) **void place,** empty or vacant, bec. used for court of justice and place of assembly.[b] (11) **made him,** had made. He seems to have been leader of these false prophets. **horns of iron,** small projections, worn as military ornaments. The horn being the weapon of animals, symbolised their power. **push,** as an animal does. (12) **the Lord,** here and in *v.* 11 the proper name of God, *Jehovah*, is used. (13) **like the word,** this was warning kindly meant. (14) **that will I speak,** as a true and faithful prophet.

The unfaithful minister.—A dying nobleman sent for the clergyman on whose ministry he had attended, and said to him, "Do you not know that my life has been licentious, and that I have violated the commandments of God? yet you never warned me of my danger." The clergyman was silent. When the nobleman repeated the question, he replied, "Yes, my lord, your manner of living was not unknown to me, but your kindness and my fear of offending you deterred me from reproving you." "How cruel! how wicked!" said the dying man. "The provision I made for you and your family ought to have induced care and fidelity. You have neglected to warn and instruct me, and now my soul will be lost." These were the last words of one whose situation, it is to be feared, has too many parallels.

15—18. (15) **go, and prosper,** the words are similar to those used by the false prophets. their tone was very different. Micaiah speaks in *irony.*[a] (16) **many times,** suggesting that Micaiah was accustomed to use this mocking, ironical, manner. This vexed Ahab greatly. (17) **I saw,**[b] as in prophetic vision. **no master,** plainly suggesting the death of the king. (18) **no good,** attributing this to a personal animosity of the prophets.

The man who made others sin (*v.* 15).—Apply this—I. To

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attached to the *calf worship.* So *Keil and Heng stenberg.*

b "They do not use the word Jehovah, but *Adonai* (they do in *vv.* 11, 12). In the parallel passage of Chron., it is ha-Elohim (2 Chr. xviii. 5)."—*Wordsworth.*

c So *Josephus* and *Jewish Coms.*

d Pr. xv. 12; Am. v. 10; Jno. iii. 19, 20, vii. 7.

v. 8. *A. Macdonald,* 336; *J. G. Dowling,* 293; *C. Girdlestone,* ii. 237; *Abp. Whately,* 310.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

f E. L. Magson.

Micaiah is sent for to Samaria

a "The two kings—an unprecedented sight—sit side by side, each on his throne, in full pomp, in the wide open space before the gateway of Samaria."—*Stanley.*

"The Oriental kings have portable thrones wh. they can take with them on their journeys."—*Layard.*

b Ru. iv. 1; 2 Sa. xv. 2, xix. 8; Ps. cxxvii., etc.

v. 12. *A. Roberts,* ii. 149.

v. 14. *W. Richardson,* i. 1.

Micaiah predicts the defeat of Israel

a Comp. Elijah's tone, ch. xviii. 27.

b "In the vision wh. he describes, we feel that we are gradually

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drawing nearer to the times of the later prophets. It is a vision wh. might rank amongst those of Isaiah, or of Ezekiel."—*Stanley.*

c Mat. ix. 36. Comp. 1 Ki. xxxii. 36.

d *R. H. Davies.* "Unselfish and noble acts are the most radiant epochs in the biography of souls. When wrought in earliest youth, they lie in the memory of age like the coral islands, green and sunny, amidst the melancholy waste of ocean."—*Thomas.*

e *Dr. Macleod.*

the lying spirit among the prophets

a Is. vi. 1; Eze. i. 26; Da. vii. 9; Ac. vii. 56; Re. iv. 2.

b Job i. 6, ii. 1; Ps. ciii. 20, 21; Da. vii. 10; Zec. i. 10; Mat. xviii. 10; He. i. 7, 14.

c "Not by any sudden stroke of vengeance, but by the very network of evil council wh. he has woven for himself, is the king of Israel to be led to his ruin."—*Stanley.*

d "Visions of the invisible world can only be a sort of parables; revelations not of the truth as it actually is, but of so much of the truth as can be shown through such a medium." —*Spk. Com.*

e *C. Simeon, M.A.*

vv. 20—24. *Bp. Medley*, 312.

parents. Case of Eli (1 Sa. iii.); Isa. xiv. 20. II. To masters. Note Eph. vi. A hint to those who cause violation of the Sabbath. III. To superiors, as rulers, etc.[d]

Inevitable influence.—That which a man is, that sum-total made up of the items of his beliefs, purposes, affections, tastes, and habits, manifested in all he does and does not, is contagious in its tendency, and is ever photographing itself on other spirits. He himself may be as unconscious of this emanation of good or evil from his character, as he is of the contagion of disease from his body, or, if that were equally possible, of the contagion of good health; but the fact, nevertheless, is certain. If the light is in him, it must shine; if darkness reigns, it must shade; if he glows with love, it will radiate its warmth; if he is frozen with selfishness, the cold will chill the atmosphere around him; and if corrupt and vile, he will poison it. Nor is it possible for any one to occupy a neutral or indifferent position. In some form or other he must affect others. Were he to banish himself to a distant island, or even enter the gates of death, he still exercises a positive influence, for he is a loss to his brother—the loss of that most blessed gift of God, even that of a living man to living men, of a being who ought to have loved and to have been beloved.[e]

19—23. (19) **I saw the Lord,**[a] a second and loftier vision of Jehovah as the real King of Israel. **host of heaven,**[b] as attendants on His throne. (20) **persuade,** with idea to deceive. Ahab's punishment was to come thro' a self-delusion, encouraged by the prophets.[c] (21) **a spirit,** the spirit of lying; compare the scene in opening chapters of Job.[d] (22) **wherewith,** or how do you propose to do it? (23) **Lord hath,** *etc.*, it is God's message, not my making up.

Satan's stratagem to deceive Ahab.—Let us consider the power of Satan to deceive men, and inquire into—I. The sources of his power. It arises from—1. His having so many other spirits under his command; 2. His wisdom and subtlety; 3. His easy access to the minds of men; 4. The number and influence of his confederates; 5. The willingness of men to be deceived. II. Its limits. It is limited in—1. Duration; 2 Objects: its influence not universal; 3. Operations. Conclusion:—(1) Guard against obstinacy in sin; (2) Seek an interest in Christ, in His death, in His intercession, in His grace.[e]

Heaven (*v.* 19).—By "heaven," in many places of Scripture, is intended, as already hinted, either the aerial heavens, the atmosphere encompassing the globe, or the sky, in which apparently move the celestial orbs. The birds are spoken of as "the birds of heaven," because they fly to and fro, or soar beyond our sight. The stars are called the "host of heaven" in several places. Moses, by inspiration, foretells what should befall Israel if they came to "worship the host of heaven," as was the custom of the heathen nations; that is, either the stars, or deities named after them and supposed to be connected with them. And Stephen, in his address, refers to the fact that Israel did fall into this sin of idolatry as thus described. We find, however, that the "host of heaven" has sometimes another signification, being also applied to the angels. Here Micaiah describes, in the form of a parable, what was occurring in the unseen world. He saw in vision the "host of heaven" standing around the Divine

throne, while the destinies of the king of Israel were trembling in the balance. Or occasionally the dwellers in heaven are by metonymy called "heaven," as in Job xv. 15. "The heavens are not clean in His sight."

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vv. 21—23. *A. Fuller, Wks.* 508. *v.* 23. *Bp. Mant*, ii. 260; *T. Arnold*, 113.

24—28. (24) **Zedekiah**, *v.* 11. **smote Micaiah**, who was prob. bound, as coming fr. the prison. **which way**, *etc.*,[a] putting his pretension to speak by the Spirit to the utmost scorn. (25) **to hide thyself**, fr. the wrath of those who will put thee to death for leading Ahab to destruction by false counsels. (26) **back**, intimating that he was in custody before. **governor**, or chief of the garrison of the city. **king's son**, *see* 2 Chron. xviii. 30, poss. a state office is referred to. (27) **bread**, *etc.*, a scanty diet, as if to compel him to bless Ahab's enterprise. (28) **return . . peace**,[b] the result will testify wh. has spoken truly.

Micaiah is insulted and imprisoned

a "Josephus observes that when Ahab saw no evil followed to Zedekiah for striking Micaiah, he was emboldened to despise M.'s warning."—*Wordsworth.*

b Nu. xvi. 29; De. xviii. 21, 22; Pr xxix. 21; Is. xliv. 25, 26.

A faithful preacher.—Bishop Latimer having one day preached a sermon before King Henry the Eighth which had displeased his majesty, he was ordered to preach again on the next Sunday, and to make an apology for the offence he had given. After reading his text, the good bishop thus began his sermon: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease: but then, consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest; upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God, who is all-present, and who beholdest all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care thou deliverest thy message faithfully." He then proceeded with the same sermon he had preached the preceding Sunday, but with considerably more energy. The sermon ended, the court were full of expectation to know what would be the fate of this honest and plain-dealing bishop. After dinner, the king called for Latimer, and, with a stern countenance, asked him how he dared to be so bold as to preach in such a manner. Falling on his knees, he replied, his duty to his God and his prince had enforced him thereto; and that he had merely discharged his duty and his conscience in what he had spoken. Upon which the king, rising from his seat, and taking the good man by the hand, embraced him, saying, "Blessed be God, I have so honest a servant!"

"Life is so ordered in Providence, that what we call great deeds only occur now and then. Even princes and conquerors cannot be always magnificent. If we are not doing good in the ordinary affairs of life, we are not the persons whom Jesus commends."—*J. W. Alexander.*

"Flattery, which was formerly a vice, is now grown into a custom."—*Publius Syrus.*

29—33. (29) **and Jehosh.**, who ought to have believed the warning.[a] (30) **disguise myself**, evidently fearing the truth of the prophecy. It was usual in battles to try and secure the person of the king. **thy robes**, so as to appear the king. (31) **commanded**, had commanded. **fight**, *etc.*, he only means, above everything try to secure Ahab. (32) **cried out**, not in fear, but his peculiar battle-cry, which showed him to be only a confederate king. (33) **turned back**,[b] in their anxiety to secure the right person.

battle between the allied army and Syria

a 2 Comp. Chr. xix. 2.

b 2 Chr. xviii. 31.

"That which we acquire with most difficulty we retain the longest; as those who have earned a fortune are usually more

War defined.—

If the stroke of war
Fell certain on the guilty head, none else—
If they that make the cause might taste the effect,
And drink themselves the bitter cup they mix,

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careful of it than those who have inherited one."—*Colton.*

c Crowe.

"War is the sink of all injustice."—*Fielding.*

Then might the bard, the child of peace, delight
To twine fresh wreaths around the conqueror's brow;
Or haply strike his high-toned harp, to swell
The trumpet's martial sound, and bid them on
When justice arms for vengeance; but, alas!
That undistinguishing and deathful storm
Beats heaviest on the exposed and innocent;
And they that stir its fury, while it raves,
Safe and at distance send their mandates forth
Unto the mortal ministers that wait
To do their bidding![c]

death of Ahab

a "The joints were probably pieces of armour which attached the breastplate to the helmet, or to the greaves."—*Spk. Com.*

b "His death was kingly, and became him better than his life. When mortally wounded, he directed his chariot to be quietly driven aside, that he might have his wounds dressed; and then returned to the battle, supported in his chariot until the evening, when he died."—*Kitto;* so *Ewald.*

c R. Berry.

v. 34. *Adn. Townson,* 87; *A. Roberts,* vi. 313; *G. Moberly,* ii. 63.

v. 35. *W. Reading,* iv. 43.

vv. 37—39. *H. Goodwin,* ii. 33.

"Let the gulled fool the toils of war pursue, where bleed the many to enrich the few."—*Shenstone.*

reign of Jehoshaphat

a Comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 2—5, xv. 8—17.

b 2 Chr. xviii. 1.

34—40. (34) **at a venture,** lit. *in his simplicity:* not taking aim at the king. **joints . . harness,** lit. *bet. the joints and the breastplate.*[a] **hand,** or hands, as the chariot-driver held the reins in both hands. (35) **stayed up,** supported by attendants.[b] **midst,** the bosom, or rounded front of the chariot. (36) **proclamation,** when Ahab was known to be dead. (37) **so the king,** prob. should be, *for the king is dead.* (38) **pool of Samaria,** large tank or reservoir just outside the walls. Josephus says the usual bathing-place of the Sam. harlots. **washed his armour,** trans. *the harlots bathed in it.* (39) **ivory house,** Am. iii. 15. (40) **Ahaziah,** a son of Jezebel's.

Gospel archery (*v.* 34).—I. The hearts of the unsaved are encased in harness. The harness of—1. Indifference; 2. Pleasure; 3. Worldliness; 4. Religious formality. II. Having these harnessed hearts for a mark, the Gospel bow must be drawn. At some must be shot the arrows of—1. Divine goodness; 2. Divine threatenings; 3. Divine love.[c]

A shot at a venture (*v.* 34).—Early in the year 1816 the Rev. R. Knill visited Devonshire, his native country, prior to his embarkation as a missionary to Madras. In several towns of North Devon he gave his reasons for becoming a missionary, and his addresses created some excitement. On one of these occasions Aaron Buzacott was sitting with the choir in the gallery, behind the pulpit, when Mr. Knill, after relating how he himself had been led to say, "Lord, here am I; send me," turned round, and, as if pointing directly to him, said, "There is a young man in that gallery who is now saying, 'Lord, here am I; send me.'" Our young friend had already secretly uttered this prayer, and when Mr. Knill made this appeal, he could scarcely refrain from uttering it aloud. It will be readily believed that this circumstance exerted no small influence upon his future career. Timidity, however, frustrated an attempt he made to see Mr. Knill, but the appeal was never forgotten. Through many a day, and through many a sleepless night, his heart was ever ejaculating "Lord, here am I; send me." He says, "In consequence of my youth, and conscious unfitness for such a work, shame prevented me from mentioning the subject to any earthly friend; but I did not soon give up the hope that God would some day hear and answer my prayer."

41—45. (41) **Jehoshaphat,** 2 Chr. xx. 31. (42) **Azubah,** *forsaken, ruins:* a person not otherwise mentioned. The mother's names are given to assure purity of descent. (43) **Asa,** 1 Ki. xv. 11—15.[a] **high . . away,** comp. 2 Chr. xvii. 6. (44) **made peace,** early in his reign; cementing it by marrying his son to

Ahab's daughter.[b] (45) **might . . warred,** of which account is given in Chron.[c]

Irremediable influence.—When John Newton was on board *The Harwich*, he corrupted a young man, previously free from open vice, who soon arrived at maturity in guilt. Years after, they met. Newton was changed, and desired to rescue his former companion from the effects of which he had himself been the guilty cause. As he no longer felt infidelity to be tenable, he strove to undeceive his victim. His usual reply, however, was, that Newton was the first to give him an idea of his liberty, which he would not now forego. His efforts were vain; he got worse, spurned all restraints, gave loose to every passion. His excesses threw him into a malignant fever, of which he died; but not till he had appalled all those about him, and pronounced his own sad doom, without showing any symptom that he hoped or asked for mercy.[d]

46 - 50. (46) **sodomites,** ch. xiv. 24. (47) **no king,** no independent king. **a deputy,** put to govern by Jehoshaphat. (48) **ships of Tharshish,** ch. x. 22. **Ophir,** ch. ix. 28. **broken,** or wrecked. 2 Chr. xx. 37. **Ezion-geber,** ch. ix. 26. (49) **would not,** either bec. alliance with Ahab had already worked badly for him, or bec. the destruction of the fleet showed God was against the undertaking.[a] (50) **Jehoram,** whom *Jehovah has exalted.*

Jehoshaphat's gold fleet.—Intro.—Explain the words of text. (1) *Jehoshaphat.* Sketch his hist. (2 Chron. xvi.—xxi.). A good king on the whole, yet he does some foolish things (as 2 Chron. xx. 35—37). (2) *Ships of Tharshish*, such were the ships called that sailed to T.; afterwards all great ocean-going vessels were called by that name (as we call a certain class of ships East Indiamen, though many of them may not go to E. Indies). They were large and strong. (3) *Ophir*, a district in India. (4) *Ezion-geber*, a port at the N. end of the Red Sea. I. *The object of the king.*—To get gold. This not wrong If we had something in a locked room, there would be no harm in looking for the key. Gold is as a key. Dis. betw. seeking money for lawful purposes and in proper quantities and loving it for its own sake. "Love of money the root of all evil." He sought it as a king, to support his court and country, and we, as plain people, for our families. He was not, so far as we know, influenced by covetousness or ambition. II. *The means he employed to secure that end.*—He made ships, etc. 1. It was the usual method. Solomon employed the same means, and his ships sailed fr. same port. This, therefore, no daring innovation, no rash experiment. He might be guided by past history, and be encouraged by past successes. 2. It was a prudent method. He built special vessels—large and strong, suited for the voyage. He had many of them. "Made ships," should be trans. "had ten ships" (*see* Kitto). Did not risk all his gold in one vessel. Out of a fleet some might outride a tempest (two strings to bow, etc.). 3. It was a lawful method. Commerce, not conquest of other people, nor oppressive taxing at home (comp. Rehoboam). Men who work or trade and so pursue honest callings, use means that are usual, prudent, lawful. III. *The calamity that befell his fleet.*—They were broken, *i.e.* wrecked. 1. The source of it. God of providence. He reigns over nature, and has often used the forces, etc., of nature to carry out His plans (*ill.* battle of Beth-horon, Sisera, Jonah, etc.). He reigns over mind. From

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c Wars, 2 Ki. iii. 9—27; 2 Chr. xx. 1—27.

Might, 2 Chr. xvii. 12—19, xviii. 1, xx. 29, 30.

"None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing."—*Franklin.*

d *Tweedie.*

Jehoshaphat's gold fleet

a Comp. 2 Chr. xx. 35—37.

v. 48. *B. E. Nicholls*, 167.

"Midas longed for gold, and insulted the Olympians. He got gold, so that whatever he touched became gold, and he, with his long ears, was little the better for it. Midas had insulted Apollo and the gods; the gods gave him his wish, and a pair of long ears, which also were a good appendage to it. What a truth in these old fables!"—*Carlyle.*

"Gold is a wonderful clearer of the understanding: it dissipates every doubt and scruple in an instant; accommodates itself to the meanest capacities; silences the loud and clamorous, and brings over the most obstinate and inflexible."—*Addison.*

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"Gold is Cæsar's treasure, man is God's; thy gold hath Cæsar's image, and thou hast God's; give therefore those things unto Cæsar which are Cæsar's, and unto God which are God's."—*Quarle.*

b Hive, S. S. Address.

changes in opinion, wars, etc., arise many disasters to trade and labour. 2. The reason of it (*see* hist.). He had formed worldly alliances, etc. Had not seen their wrongness, and repented of them. 3. The prediction of it (*see* hist.). Yet he persevered, and in alliance with Ahaziah. Refused to mind good advice. IV. *The effect that it produced on his own mind and conduct* (*see v.* 49).—He broke off the alliance. Refused to let Ahaziah's servants go with his. His repentance was sincere—practical. Learn :—1. You who are now gold-spenders only, will be soon gold-seekers as well. Let it be sought honestly, contentedly, etc. 2. Beware of alliances with worldly men and maxims; otherwise the blessing of God will not rest on what is good and honest. 3. Repent of your evil in the past, that God's blessing may abide on and prosper your good in the future.[b]

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab

a 1 Ki. xvi. 31, xxi. 25; 2 Ki. iii. 2.

b Ps. cvi. 29; Is. lxv. 3; Eze. viii. 3.

"The most brutal man cannot live in constant association with a strong female influence, and not be greatly controlled by it."—*Mrs. Stowe.*

Bad parents.—Mother of Micah (Judg. xvii. 3); Eli (1 Sam. iii. 13); Saul (1 Sam. xx. 33); Athaliah (2 Chron. xxii. 3); Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 6); Herodias (Mark vi. 24).

"When thou art contemplating some base deed, forget not thy child's tender years, but let the presence of thy infant son act as a check on thy headlong course to sin."—*Juvenal.*

"The voice of parents is the voice of gods, for to their children they are Heaven's lieutenants."—*Shakespeare.*

b E. Bickersteth.

51—53. (51) **Ahaziah,** *v.* 40. (52) **of his mother,** whose name is never spoken without reproaches.[a] She is the worst woman introduced in Scripture. (53) **served Baal,**[b] by this expression a distinction is made bet. calf worship, wh. was a depraved Mosaism, and the active worship of foreign and heathen gods. These three *vv.* should commence 2 Kings.

Parental influence.—How fearful—when we look on the face of the whole earth, and trace the present condition of its inhabitants back to their original ancestors, and mark how, step by step, men departed from God—is the responsibility of rightly using that precious gift, the gift of children! We may see, with broad and distinct lines, in every land, how vast and extensive, how lengthened, how enduring is the influence of the conduct of the parent on the character and happiness of future ages! An infant born in New Zealand follows its cruel parents in barbarism and cannibalism; an infant in China inherits the deceitfulness and ungodliness of Chinese paganism; infants among Arabs, Hottentots, American Indians, are brought up in all the respective peculiarities, vices, and miseries of their various countries, and continue in them, unless God graciously interposes, with deepening darkness and misery. Yet the original ancestors of all these, those sunk in error and wickedness, were the sons of one man, and had equal advantages in the beginning, till parents led the way in evil. Ham and his son Canaan departed from the good ways of Noah, and so all Africa became debased. In one branch of the family of Shem, chiefly through God's special interposition in the call of Abraham, the Church of God continued for 2,000 years; in other branches we see the issues of wickedness throughout the immense continent of Asia. What a blessing was Abraham's piety to his posterity! And the inheritance of this is expressly assured to all the followers of the faith of Abraham; so that we see a similar blessing in the families of all who truly receive the Gospel. The strength of vital godliness in every country is in those who were the children of pious parents, and the hope of the age to come is in their descendants. They, too, are made the vessels of mercy to bear mercy to others; and thus Gospel blessedness spreads through those all around them. This accords with the revealed mind of God, who meets the deepest and strongest wishes of the human heart, yearning over our offspring, that they may partake of our happiness, by assuring to the children of believers the same blessings which they themselves enjoy.[b]

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

Synopsis.

(*According to Bähr, in Lange.*)

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2ND EPOCH (*continued*).

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(*b.*) Elisha's appearance .....ii.
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(*c.*) Syrian invasion, etc. .....vi. 8—vii.
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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

B.C. *cir.* 896.

Elijah predicts the death of Ahaziah

1—4. (1) **Moab rebelled,** it had been subdued by Dav.[a] (2) **lattice,**[b] windows are often closed with lattices of interlaced wood, wh. open outwards. **Baal-zebub,** *lord of the fly*, or *fly-destroyer*, flies constituting one of the most terrible plagues of the East. **Ekron,** Jos. xiii. 3, now *Akir*. (3) **angel,** or messenger. **meet,** so as to arrest their progress. **a God in Israel,** they had put away Jehovah, and now showed they had no faith in their chosen gods. (4) **surely die,** as a judgment for the insult of seeking other gods.

Death-bed contrasts (comp. *ve.* 2—4, 16, 17. with 2 Ki. xxi. 5). —These two royal sufferers being dead speak to us. I. Notice the points of comparison and contrast. 1. Points of comparison. Both are—(1) Kings; (2) In the midst of manhood; (3) Dangerously ill; (4) Unwilling to die; (5) Told that death is near; (6) Uttered longings in prayer. 2. Points of contrast. (1) One impious, the other godly; (2) One prayed to idols, the other to God; (3) One recovered, the other soon died. II. Gather some lessons from these points:—(1) The chief events of life happen alike to all; (2) Great crises lead men to look for external help; (3) The sources to which men look for help are most opposite and unlike.[c]

The timely warning.—The lighthouse reared on a sunken reef flings its lurid glare far through a stormy air and over a stormy sea, not to teach the mariner how to act with vigour when he is among the breakers, but to warn him back, so that he may never fall among the breakers at all. Even so the end of the lost is revealed in the Word of God, not to urge us to utter a very loud cry when the door is shut, but to compel us to enter now while the door is open.[d]

Ahaziah's messengers return

5—8. (5) **turned back,** so soon it was evident they had not fulfilled their commission. (6) **a man,** they did not know him, but were forced to yield to his authoritative tone. (7) **manner of man,** fr. his description he might guess who he was. (8) **hairy man,** either with long hair and beard, or clad in a hairy garment,[a]

The comfort of fidelity.—Whitefield and a pious companion were much annoyed one night at a public-house by a set of gamblers in the room adjoining where they slept. Their noisy clamour and horrid blasphemy so excited Whitefield's abhorrence and pious sympathy that he could not rest. "I will go to them and reprove their wickedness," said he. His companion remonstrated in vain. He went. His words of reproof were apparently powerless upon them. Returning he lay down to sleep. His companion asked him. "What did you gain by it?" "A soft pillow," he said, and soon fell asleep.

Elijah invokes fire from heaven

9—12. (9) **sent,** to arrest the prophet. **top of a hill,** either that on wh. he had met the messengers, *v.* 3; or Carmel,[a] Elij.'s usual residence. **man of God,** designation of prophet; such Elij. was recognised to be. (10) **let fire,** the symbol of God closely connected with Elij.[b] This not a mere securing of personal safety, but a public vindication of the honour of Jehovah whom

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Elijah predicts the death of Ahaziah

a Comp. Ju. iii. 12—14; 2 Sa. viii. 2.

b "The word rendered *lattice* may be a *rail*, wh. may suggest that in leaning against the rail, forming the inner fence of the housetop, it gave way, and he fell into the court below."—*Kitto.*

Bp. Hall, Cont.

v. 2. *Dr. J. Edwards, Exer.* 81.

v. 3. *A. Macdonald*, 28; *F. D. Maurice*, 123.

c U. R. Thomas.

d Arnot.

Ahaziah's messengers return

a "The Aba or Mesleh of the Arabs is often made of black sackcloth, of goat's or camel's hair, very large, so that the owner wraps himself in it to sleep."—*Thomson.* Comp. Matt. iii. 4; Mk. i. 6.

Elijah invokes fire from heaven

a Stanley; Wordsworth.

b 1 Ki. xviii.; 2 Ki. ii. 11.

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the king had insulted.[c] Kitto supposes the fire was lightning. (11) **quickly,** at once, without further resistance. (12) **if I be,** *etc.*, clearly putting it as a vindication of his prophetic claim.

Elijah calls down fire from heaven (*vv.* 11, 12).—As to Elijah's conduct here, we will show—I. How it may be vindicated. Consider—1. The provocation given: 2. The judgment inflicted; 3. The ends for which it was inflicted. II. How it may be improved. In a way of—1. Caution; 2. Instruction. Note—(1) The danger of persecuting God's saints; (2) The security of all who trust in God.[d]

The punishment of presumption.—When the Rev. Joseph Woodward, one of the Nonconformist ministers in the seventeenth century, was settled at Dursley, he vigorously set about the reformation of many disorders in discipline and manners that existed among the people. In particular, he declared his resolution to admit none to the Lord's Supper but those who, besides a visible correctness of conversation, had a competent knowledge of Divine things. One man said, "He would not submit to examination, and if Mr. Woodward would not give him the sacrament he would take it!" In pursuance of his impious resolution this man was coming to church on the sacrament-day, but he had scarcely set one foot over the threshold before he fell down dead.

13—18. (13) **fell on his knees,** in contrast with tone of previous captains: this the attitude of humble suppliant. **be precious,** 1 Sa. xxvi. 21. (14) **let my life,** *etc.*, he pleads that the former judgments might suffice to vindicate the prophet's honour. (15) **angel,** as *v.* 3. **afraid of him,**[a] *i.e. Ahaziah.* (16) **visit not,** *etc.*, "was it not done in order to show that there is no God in Israel." (17) **Jehoram,** Ahaziah's brother. **because he,** *i.e.* Ahaziah. **second year,**[b] comp. ch. iii. 1, viii. 16. (18) **book,** *etc.*, as 1 Ki. xxii. 39.

A faithful servant.—When M. Barthelemy was sent, with several others, into banishment at Cayenne, his servant, Le Tellier, came running up, as he was getting into the carriage, with an order from the directory, permitting him to accompany his master. He delivered it to Augereau, who, having read it, said, "You are determined, then, to share the fate of these men, who are lost for ever? Whatever events await them be assured they will never return." "My mind is made up," answered Le Tellier, "I shall be happy to share the misfortunes of my master." "Well, then," replied Augereau, "go, fanatic, and perish with him;" adding at the same time, "Soldiers, let this man be watched as closely as these miscreants." Le Tellier threw himself on his knees before his master, who felt exquisite pleasure at such a moment to press so affectionate a friend to his bosom. This valuable servant continued to show the same courage and attachment during the voyage, and after they arrived at Cayenne; and he was treated as an equal and companion, not only by his master, but by the companions of his exile.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—4. (1) **when,** *etc.*, this event prob. occurred several years later on. **whirlwind,** furious sweeping gale, generally coming from the E.[a] **Elisha,** 1 Ki. xix. 16, 19—21. **Gilgal,** some

c "Not in his own defence could Elij. have been the death of so many; but God, by a peculiar instinct, made him an instrument of His just vengeance."—*Bp. Hall.*
Comp. Lu. ix. 54—56; 2 Th. i. 9; Heb. xii. 29; Re. xi. 5.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*
"Over some prophets the coming second covenant seems in some sort to project its shadow. It is otherwise with Elijah. His zeal is fierce; he is not shocked by blood; he has no softness and no relenting."—*Spk. Com.*

death of Ahaziah

a Ps. cii. 17; Mat. x. 28.

b "Prob. Jehoshaphat associated his son as coregent with himself, in the seventeenth year of his reign,"—*Wordsworth.*

v. 17. *J. S. M. Anderson*, 126.

"Good actions crown themselves with lasting days; who well deserves needs not another's praise."—*Heath.*

"Trust reposed in noble natures obliges them the more."—*Dryden.*

Elisha cleaves to Elijah

a *Ayre*

think the Gilgal by Jericho,[b] as Jos. iv. 19; others think it cannot possibly be this, and identify with *Jilgilia*,[c] S.W. of Shiloh. (2) **tarry**, as the prophet wished to be alone in his departure. Perhaps, also, he was testing the fidelity of his servant.[d] **Bethel**, Ge. xii. 8. (3) **sons**, *etc.*, 1 Ki. xx. 35. (4) **Jericho**, Jos. vi. 1—27, here, also, a school of the prophets.

The eve of departure (*vv.* 1—6). — The Christian's work is finished before his removal, just as Elijah's was. At his death, like Elijah in his translation, he is removed from the scene of labour to the scene of recompense. Let us look at Elijah as he appears on the eve of his departure. Notice—I. His wonderful composure in the immediate prospect of so momentous and glorious a change; and the cause of this we find in the intimacy of his communion with God. II. His desire to pass away without the presence of others. III. His visit to the scene of his works.[e]

Eastern whirlwinds (*v.* 1).—Whirlwinds in Eastern countries are sudden and miraculous in their effects. In a sultry day, and without any previous agitation in the atmosphere, they will take place, carrying upwards with a revolving motion whatever may chance to come within their vortex. Bodies of great weight are thus moved from their places, and carried spirally upward, till they are lost sight of in the clouds. The effects of one of these whirlwinds, confined probably to a small circumference, was witnessed once in India. A roofing of palm branches and grass was laid on the ground, ready to be supported on poles for the front of a bungalow. It was heavy, several yards long and broad, and it had taken eight men to lift and carry. Suddenly, and without warning, for the day had been excessively hot, and there appeared not a breath of air, this roof was moved to and fro, and after flapping a moment or two was raised aloft, and carried upwards with speed, whirling round and round as it went up, till at last it became but a speck in the distance, and was soon lost to sight. In countries where whirlwinds are of frequent occurrence it is not surprising that the sons of the prophets, seeing Elijah go up by a whirlwind into heaven, should have urged Elisha to send and seek after him, lest, as they said, he might be taken up, and cast "upon some mountain, or into some valley."

B.C. *cir.* 896.

b *Wordsworth.*

c *Spk. Com.*; *Robinson.*

d Comp. 2 Ki. iv. 30; Ru. i. 16.

Bp. Hall, *Cont.*; *J. Saurin*, v. 432.

v. 3. *S. Bourn*, *Ss.*

e *Dr. W. Landels.* "Living is death; dying is life. We are not what we appear to be. On this side of the grave we are exiles, on that citizens; on this side orphans, on that children; on this side captives, on that freemen; on this side disguised, unknown, on that disclosed and proclaimed as the sons of God!"—*H. W. Beecher.*

"Seas are the fields of combat for the winds; and when they sweep along some flowery coast, their wings move mildly, and their rage is lost."—*Dryden.*

5—8. (5) **sons**, *etc.*,[a] as *v.* 3. (6) **to Jordan**, or the Jordan, wh. separated him from Gilead, his native district. (7) **to view**, from the heights around Jericho they could see much of the course of the river. (8) **mantle**, the characteristic of Elij., as the rod was of Moses. **wrapped it**, so as to be like a rod. **smote**,[b] the word indicates a vigorous smite: violently smote. **divided**, comp. Jos. iii. 16.

Spiritual associations of the river Jordan (*v.* 7).—The river Jordan reminds us of—I. The great forbearance and wonderful kindness of the Divine Providence. An instance of this in Jacob's life. II. The honour which God confers upon His faithful servants. III. The merciful interposition of God on behalf of His people at the hour of death. IV. The awful destiny which awaits all those who live and die in sin.[c]

True friendship.—

When adversities flow
Then love ebbs; but friendship standeth stiffly

Elijah divides the river

a "The young men in these colleges seem, like the Jews in later periods of their history, to have been instructed in mechanics, husbandry, and other useful arts of life."—*Macduff.*

b Comp. Ex. vii. 20, viii. 17, xiv. 16, 21; Nu xx. 11.

c *Homilist.* "Friendship is no plant of hasty

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In storms. Time draweth wrinkles in a fair
Face, but addeth fresh colours to a fast
Friend, which neither heat, nor cold, nor misery,
Nor place, nor destiny can alter or
Diminish. Oh! friendship, of all things the
Most rare, and therefore most rare because most
Excellent: whose comforts in misery
Are always sweet, and whose counsels in
Prosperity are ever fortunate.
Vain love! that only coming near to friendship
In name, would seem to be the same, or better,
In nature.[d]

growth; though planted in esteem's deep-fix'd soil, the gradual culture of kind intercourse must bring it to perfection."—*Joanna Baillie.*

d Lilly.

Elijah ascends to heaven

9—11. (9) **ask,** *etc.*, this seems to have been the close of their converse, and was a last acknowledgment of Elisha's faithfulness. **double portion,** comp. De. xxi. 17,[a] the proper portion for Elij.'s firstborn spiritual son. Not double the power of Elij.,[b] but "heirship, succession to Elij. in his place as prophet in Israel."[c] (10) **see me,**[d] wh. would be a final test of Elisha's faith and devotion. Omit the words *when I am.* (11) **chariot,**[e] this the form appearing to the watching Elisha. There was a storm, but we can attempt no *explanation* of the scene.

The translation of Elijah (*v.* 11).—Consider—I. The event itself. 1. Elijah and Elisha still going on and talking; 2. The sudden and glorious appearing, on the plain beside them, of a chariot of fire and horses of fire; 3. The parting of Elijah and Elisha asunder by the chariot; 4. Elijah going up into heaven by a whirlwind; 5. Elijah's mantle falling from him as he went up. II. Its purposes and lessons. As they respect—1. Elijah himself; 2. Elisha; 3. The Church of those days; 4. The Church of these days; 5. Ourselves individually.[f]

A Scripture difficulty reconciled (comp. *v.* 11 with Jo. iii. 13).—To get this apparent difficulty removed we must look at the context, that is, at the verses which go before and follow after, and thus try to ascertain the scope and design of our Lord in His remarks. Now in reading the context we perceive that the design of the Saviour was to impress Nicodemus with the great truth that He was superior to all other teachers. Nicodemus had already acknowledged that Christ was a teacher sent from God (*v.* 2), but he did not know at that time that Christ was the Son of God. Our Lord, therefore, informs him that He came direct from heaven, and was at the time He was speaking to him actually in heaven as well as on earth (*see v.* 13), and therefore superior to all other teachers, for no other teacher had come direct from heaven, nor had any prophet or teacher who had ascended to heaven ever returned to earth to teach men the wonders of the spiritual world. Our Lord, therefore, was contrasting Himself in this respect with all other teachers. He did not mean that no man had ascended to heaven by translation, but that no prophet or teacher had first ascended to God in heaven, to receive from Him there the instructions He had afterwards to give to mankind; but that He Himself had come direct from the presence of God in heaven, and that while His bodily presence was on earth, His spiritual presence was also in heaven, and therefore He was more than man; He was not only a teacher, but truly the "Son of God who had come from the bosom of the Father." Moses had ascended the summit of Sinai, and Elijah

a "The phrase employed in De. xxi. 17, to denote the amount of a father's goods, wh. were the right and token of a first-born son, is literally 'a mouth of two,' a double mouthful. Thus the gift of the 'double portion' of Elij.'s spirit was but the legitimate conclusion of the act of adoption, wh. began with the casting off the mantle at Abel-meholah years before."—*Smith's Bib. Dict.*

b "It is only a quite external and superficial view of the career of Elisha that can see in it a proof that double the spirit of Elij. rested upon him."—*Keil.*

c Kitto.

d "If permitted to see the miraculous ascension, he may accept this as a pledge and assurance, on God's part, that the farewell request is not denied."—*Macduff.*

e 2 Ki. vi. 17.

v. 9. *Bp. Browning*, ii. 295; *J. H. Newman*, 185.

vv. 9, 10. *J. Williams*, 242.

v. 9. I do not

had gone to the high cliffs of Horeb, and both had been taught of God there; but no one had gone up to heaven to receive His commission from the immediate presence and unveiled glories of Jehovah's face. But He himself, being the Son of God, had dwelt from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and had come from thence filled with the treasures of infinite wisdom, and was therefore qualified, as a Divine teacher, to impart to man deeper truths, richer revelations, and more glorious manifestations of the Deity, and to impress His teachings with His personal authority as the Son of God.[g]

12–15. (12) **saw,** as condition, *v.* 10. **my father,** *etc.*,[a] in figure expressing Elisha's confidence in, and admiration for, Elij. **rent them,** as now useless to him, as he had the prophetic mantle of Elijah. (13) **took up,** as the pledge of the transference of the prophetic office to himself. (14) **smote,** *etc.*, *v.* 8. Putting to the proof at once his prophetic power: and showing the firmness of his faith. (15) **to view,** *v.* 7, *lit.* "wh. were at Jericho opposite." **bowed,** acknowledging his authority and office.[b]

Where is thy God? (*v.* 14).—I. What kind of God was Elijah's God? He was a God who—1. Heard prayer; 2. Worked wonders; 3. Preserved His people. II. Where is He now? 1. Why are prayers so seldom answered? 2. Why are wonders so seldom wrought? 3. Why is faith so little exercised? 4. Why is so little prosperity enjoyed?[c]

Unchangeableness of God.—The ocean is a striking emblem of this attribute of God. There are evident changes in connection with man, beasts, creeping things, trees, flowers, hills, valleys, rivers; but the great ocean is as it was when first the Almighty poured it forth from His boundless hand. Man seems to have the power to change the appearance and relation of all things but the ocean. Can he level its mountains or raise its valleys? Can he alter its colours, or remove its boundaries? Can he bridge its bosom and steam over the viaduct? Though he has been sailing over it these hundreds and thousands of years, east, west, north, south; and diving into its depths, and taking up its treasures; though myriads of people have gone into it as a grave, and untold bulks of merchandise have been swallowed up by its greedy deeps; yet where is the mark of any human hand? Can a single imprint of human power, skill, and genius be discerned on any part of its surface?[d]

16–18. (16) **seek,** *etc.*, no doubt they imagined they should find somewhere the dead body of Elij.[a] But as his appearances and removals had before been so sudden,[b] they may have thought to find him alive. (17) **ashamed,** to seem so stubborn. (18) **go not,** Elisha knew too well that it was Elij.'s *passing thro'* to God.

Rest beyond the grave.—It is a moody thing to say, "there is rest!" Can this be all? It is a common lot. To all our race the grave throws open such dreary refuge. Thousands hide themselves in this sanctuary, loaded with most direful guilt, pursued with most execrated memory. And is there no rest to which the spirit of the Christian springs? Is there no quiet reserve for it but the unredeeming sleep of the guilty dead? Is this the end of his faith, the cessation of remembrance, the

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hear him say, 'Ask of me when I am gone; in my glorified condition I shall be more able to be-stead thee;' but 'Ask before I go.' We have a communion with the saints departed, not a commerce'—*Bishop Hall.*

f H. Angus.

g Dr. W. Cooke.

Elijah's mantle is taken by Elisha

a "Meaning, as is generally understood, that he regarded Israel as bereft of its strength, its chariot, and its horsemen, by the departure of this great prophet."—*Kitto.*

"Elisha addresses him as 'the true defence of Israel, better than either chariots and horsemen."—*Spk. Com.* 2 Ki. xiii. 14.

b Jos. iii. 7; Is. xi. 2; 1 Pe. iv. 14.

c W. W. Wythe.

v. 12. *T. Robinson, Cha.* 2; *H. Blunt, Hist. of Elisha; Dr. F. D. Krummacher, Elisha; J. Williams,* 242. See also *Sers.* by *Bp. Ganden, Bp. Patrick, W. Ayleworth, W. Forster.*

v. 14. *J. Weemse, Expos.* i. 161.

d J. Bate.

the body of Elijah is sought for

a Kri'.

b 1 Ki. xviii. 12.

"Oh! just and mighty death! What none hast dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world have flattered, thou alone hast cast out of the world, and de-

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epised: thou hast drawn together all the far-fetched greatness, all the cruelty and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*"—*Ra'eigh.*
c Dr. R. W. Hamilton

Elisha heals the fountain
a Ge. xxxi. 38; Ex. xxiii. 26; Jos. vi. 26.
b "Elijah for the most part worked miracles *without means*, Elisha *with means.*"—*Wordsworth.*
For Scrip. symbol of *salt* comp. Le. ii. 13; Eze. xliii. 24; Mat. v. 13; Mk. ix. 49; Lu. xiv. 34.
c "About a mile and a half N.W. of Jericho, at the base of some low hillocks, thought by some to be mounds of rubbish, is the fountain-head of a stream, to wh. the place owes now, and must have formerly owed, its supply of water, and the irrigation of its field."—*Kitto.*
d C. Clayton, M.A. v. 21. *H. Blunt, Elisha.*
e Dr. Tristram.

the Bethelites mock Elisha
a "The idolatrous or infidel young men of the place, who affected to disbelieve the report of his master's translation, and sarcastically urged him to follow in the glorious

extinction of consciousness, the destruction of thought? Is this the consummation of his hope, reduced to the clay and clod? Shall not his spirit, when his flesh rests in his bed, walk in its uprightness? Shall he not, when he falls asleep in Jesus, awake in His image? Shall not he who died with the Lord be present with the Lord? Oh, beyond that dull, that common, that debasing stupor, "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." We will not point to the grave, and welcome, as our rest, the defence from trouble, and release from care, which it affords; we will look to the heavens for the Peace of our Sabbath, for the Security of our Refuge, for the endearment of our Home! *c*

19—22. (19) **city,** *i.e. Jericho.* **pleasant,** situated in a broad plain, watered by an abundant river, and shaded by groves of palm trees, etc. **naught,** bad. **barren,** *lit.* causing abortion:*a* apt to miscarry. (20) **new cruse,** wh. having never been used was unsoiled, so symbol of purity. **salt,** a cleansing or purifying agent, so further symbol of mirac. power Elisha exerted.*b* (21) **spring,** *Ain-es-Sultan,* now called Elisha's fountain.*c* (22) **healed,** or sweetened.

Jericho's water healed (*v.* 22).—Notice—I. The evil of sin. In the case of Jericho, the evil was that "its waters were naught, and its land was barren." II. Its remedy. At Jericho, "a new cruse, with salt therein." The salt we need is—1. Not mere secular education; 2. Nor even a religious education alone. Christ's spirit alone can cure us of sin. III. The effects produced. Look at the part taken by—1. The people: they gave Elisha the salt; 2. Elisha: he cast the salt in; 3. God from Him came the cure.*d*

Elisha's fountain.—It was quite dark when we reached our camping-ground, about 200 yards from Ain Sultan, called by Europeans Elisha's fountain; and as the only other fountain of any size, Ain Dûk, has always borne the same name, there can be but little doubt that this is the spring whose waters were healed by Elisha, and that the stone-hewn mounds and fragments of pottery which cover the soil are the remains of ancient Israelitish Jericho. Our new home was snugly sheltered from the north by one of the strange gravel hills which dot the district. . . The bright clear rivulet from the fountain gurgled between its turfy sides three steps in front of our tents, which were overshadowed by well-grown trees of the *Zizyphus spina-Christi,* or dôm.*e*

23—25. (23) **Bethel,** where was a school of prophets, *v.* 2. **little children,** the word used sometimes means *young men.* **mocked him,** prob. contrasting his youth with the venerable Elij., and prob. they were young idolaters set on thus to mock the prophet of the Lord.*a* **bald head,** epithet of contempt in the E. (24) **cursed them,** "the only occasion on wh. we find Elis. the minister of vengeance."*b* **children,** word here means, the eldest of them, or the ringleaders. (25) **Carmel,** wh. was closely associated with Elij.'s life.

Elisha and the naughty children (*vv.* 23, 24).—Notice this event as regards—I. The transgressors. 1. Wickedness arising from unexpected quarters: the children of Bethel; 2. That there is a great responsibility connected with a family; 3. That

neither age nor position exempts sin from being punished. II. The prophet. 1. It is dangerous to persecute God's people; 2. Religion does not deprive a man of the right of self-defence; 3. The kindest nature when aroused is the fiercest.[c]

Mocking the prophet.—Another thing to be remarked is, that these idolatrous young men did not merely insult Elisha, but they derided his prophetic character, both by the mode in which they referred to the ascent of Elijah to heaven—"Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head;" that is, follow the example of your master, and ascend to heaven in our sight; and also, by the use of the epithet which they applied to him—thou "bald head." For it does not appear that Elisha was at this time an old man; he had, no doubt, shaved his head, either under a religious vow, or as an indication of his prophetic character; and it was no doubt with reference to this that the expression was employed.[d]

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career."—*Jamieson.*

b Pr. xvii. 5, xxx. 17; Ho. xiii. 8. *vv.* 23, 24. *T. Morris*, i. 176; *S. Gough*, 271; *R. Southgate*, ii. 269. *v.* 24. *T. Arnold*, 65.

c W. A. Griffiths. "The guilt of eulogising or apologising for wicked actions is second only to that of committing them."—*Southey.*

d Carpenter.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—5. (1) **Jehoram,** comp. ch. i. 17. **eighteenth,** 1 Ki. xxii. 41, 51. (2) **not . . father,** comp. 1 Ki. xvi. 30—34. **put away,** *etc.*, the removal of the statue meant abolishing the worship.[a] (3) **sins of Jer.,** *i.e.* the calf-worship. (4) **sheep-master,**[b] lit. *noked*, a marker,[c] prob. bec. sheep were marked to distinguish both the flocks and the different breeds. **rendered,** as tribute in kind;[d] omit *with*. (5) **rebelled,** by refusing tribute and asserting independence.

Eastern flocks.—The wealth of the patriarchs consisted less in landed possessions and gold, than in the immense number of their flocks; thus we read that Job had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses (Job i. 3). It is said of Abraham that he was very rich in cattle, and that Lot also had flocks, and herds, and tents. So great, indeed, was their substance, that the land was unable to bear them, and they could not dwell together (Gen. xiii. 2—6). At a subsequent period Isaac was envied by the Philistines on account of his flocks, herds, and great store of servants (Gen. xxvi. 14). In later times, large flocks of sheep were retained for religious services. Near the temple at Jerusalem was the sheep market, set apart for the sale of sheep to those who came to present their offerings before the Lord. It has been thought by some that it was to the shepherds of these consecrated flocks that the angel first announced the birth of Christ; for after their departure, "the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass" (Luke ii. 15).

Jehoram and Mesha, the sheep master

a "He began his reign by a formal abolition of the Phœnician state religion introduced by Ahab, and a re-establishment of the old worship of the kingdom as arranged by its founder, Jeroboam." — *Spk. Com.*

b "The name of Mesha occurs on the Moabite stone."—*Rep. Pal. Explor. Fund.*

c Wordsworth, Kitto.

d 2 Sa. viii. 2; Ps. lx. 8, cviii. 9.

6—10. (6) **the same time,** immediately on ascending his throne. **numbered,** or called out a levy; mustered them for the expedition. (7) **sent,** *etc.*, the alliance bet. the royal houses being maintained. **I will go,** here Jehosh. seems to decide without seeking the Div. will. (8) **which way,** across the north end, or the south end, of the Dead Sea. **Edom,**[a] Jehosh. chose the S. way bec. Edom was at the time dependent on him. (9) **compass,** *etc.*, a difficult journey,[b] by "Jerus., Hebron, Malatha, and Thamara, to the N. Edomite country." (10) **three kings,** including that of Edom.[c]

a thirsty land where no water is

a "One object of taking this route was, most likely, to effect a junction with the forces of Edom. Another may have been to come upon the Moabites una-

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wares." — *Spk. Com.*

b Nu. xxi. 4, 5.

c Pr. xix. 3; Is. viii. 21.

The rocky way.—There were several reasons why the king of Israel preferred that way, rocky as it was; but the chief reason was to surprise the enemy, and get to the least defended part of Moab; an illustration of which we have in the account of Napoleon I. crossing the Alps. He wanted to surprise the Austrians, and prevent the Swiss from rising; and for this purpose he proceeded to cross the great St. Bernard itself, so lofty and difficult that it was considered almost an impossibility. Yet he made the attempt with an army of 30,000 men, their baggage, their ammunition, and forty pieces of cannon; and very soon the Austrians were filled with wonder, and were quite panic-stricken, in seeing the French army pouring down the sides of the inaccessible Alps.

Elisha is sent for

a "After the meals, the *ibriek* and *tusht* (pitcher and ewer) are brought, and the servant, with a napkin over his shoulder, pours on your hands." —*Thomson.*

Jno. xiii. 5, etc.

b Three Months in the Holy Land.

11—14. (11) **Jehoshaphat,** by whose advice the route was taken. **the Lord,** better *Jehovah.* **Elisha,** who seems to have followed the army. **poured water,** as servant.[a] (12) **word,** *etc.*, recognising his true prophetic character. (13) **with thee,** who hast refused, and dost dishonour, my God. **prophets,** *etc.*, of Baal. (13) **the Lord,** *i.e.* we see Jehovah's hand in our present trouble. (14) **as the Lord,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xvii. 1; 2 Ki. v. 16.

Washing of hands.—I sought in the manners and the customs of the people among whom I moved remnants of the manners and customs of Scriptural stamp. . . It was, then, with such feelings and for such a purpose that I sat in an upper room in my host's house, and there with him dipped my hand in the dish, for there was only one; after which, water was poured upon my hands first, then upon his, and we rose from the table, or rather from the ground, in no wise hindered from following our journey at once by the length or the nature of our meal.[b]

the valley dug full of ditches

a Ex. xv. 20; 1 Sa. x. 5; 1 Chron. xxv. 1—3.

b "Rather ye *will* smite — in your cruelty and rage; this is a prophecy rather than a command." — *Wordsworth.*

"In wonder all philosophy began, in wonder it ends, and admiration fills up the interspace; but the first wonder is the offspring of ignorance, the last is the parent of adoration." — *Coleridge.*

c Spurgeon.

15—20. (15) **minstrel,**[a] to compose his mind with music. (16) **valley,** broad wady. **ditches,** or pits, to keep the water that came. (17) **not see wind,** wh. usually came before storm. **rain,** the torrent down the middle of the valley would be in flood, and fill the pits. (18) **light thing,** only an illus. of what He will do for you. (19) **smite,** *etc.*,[b] this *v.* describes a general devastation of the country. (20) **when . . offered,** about sunrise.

The valley filled with water (*vv.* 16, 17).—The armies of the three kings were famishing for want of water: God was about to send it, and in these words the prophet announced the coming blessing. I. Here was a case of human helplessness: not a drop of water to be had. II. Still the people were to make a believing preparation for the Divine blessing: they were to dig the trenches in which the precious liquid would be held. The Church must, by her varied agencies, efforts, and prayers, make herself ready to be blessed; she must make the pools, and the Lord will fill them. III. By-and-by there was a singular bestowal of the needed boon. Not as in Elijah's case did the shower pour from the clouds, but in a silent and mysterious manner the pools were filled. IV. We must also notice the remarkable abundance of the supply: there was enough for the need of all. And so it is in the Gospel blessing; all wants shall be met by Divine power in answer to prayer.[c]

Thirst in the desert.—The supply of water in the waggons had

"Many do with

been wasted by one of our servants, and by the afternoon only a small portion remained for the children. This was a bitterly anxious night; and next morning, the less there was of water, the more thirsty they became. The idea of their perishing before our eyes was terrible. It would almost have been a relief to me to have been reproached with being the entire cause of the catastrophe, but not one syllable of upbraiding was uttered by their mother, though the tearful eye told the agony within. In the afternoon of the fifth day, to our inexpressible relief, some of the men returned with a supply of that fluid of which we had never before felt the true value.[d]

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opportunities as children do at the seashore: they fill their little hands with sand, and let the grains fall through one by one, till all are gone."—*T. Jones.*

d Dr. Livingstone.

21—25. (21) **put on armour,** Heb. *gird on a girdle;* collecting even young recruits. **border,** edge of their territory, overlooking the wady in wh. the hosts of Israel were. (22) **sun shone,** showing up the colour of the waters tinged with the red earth of Edom.[a] (23) **this is blood,** as there had been no rain they could not otherwise account for the pools. (24) **came,** expecting no enemy, only to take the spoil left behind. (25) **stone,** *etc.*, doing wilful damage to the country. **Kir-haraseth,**[b] Is. xvi. 7, 11, the mod. *Kerak.*

Ancient record and modern discovery (*v.* 25).—It is not merely in the names of towns and ruins that we find these records of the ancient state of things, but among the people themselves. In their language, habits, and traditions we find something constantly cropping up which illustrates the ancient records and confirms the truth of Holy Writ. A curious instance of that fell under my own notice. I discovered it in Moab, but I did not know its value till I came home. It was this: When we were encamped at Dhíbán I asked the Arabs whereabouts the Moabite stone was discovered. The answer was, "Between the two *háriths*." Now, *harith* means a ploughman, and I replied. "I suppose you mean 'The two ploughed fields'?" "No," said my informant, "I mean those two hills;" and it appears that every eminence in the country surmounted by ruined sites is called a "hárith." I noted this at the time as a curious local idiom, and took no further notice of it; but when I came across the name of the ancient capital of Moab, Kir-haraseth, and referred to the rabbinical authorities upon it, I found this word *haraseth* had considerably puzzled the commentators. Now *haresh*, or *haraseth*, in Hebrew is precisely identical with the word "hárith," which I had heard, and Kerek, the present representative of the ancient capital of Moab, stands upon the most decided eminence of this kind; and we can well understand how the ancient city might have been spoken of as *par excellence* "the city of the hill," *Kir-haraseth*. Thus we find in the present local idiom of the country the explanation of a difficulty which neither Jewish nor Christian commentators on the Bible were able to explain before.[c]

the Moabites defeated

a "The river Leontes, in Lebanon, becomes red at a certain time of the year, fr. its stream then washing or passing over beds of colouring earth."—*Kitto.*

b "Lit. *city of bricks*, or *brick fortress*."—*Gesenius.*

"Numbers of people are always standing with open mouths in a silly wonderment, enveloped in an obscurity, to which they bow with respect—they admire nature only because they believe it to be a kind of magic, which nobody understands; and we may be sure that a thing loses its value in their eyes as soon as it can be explained." — *Fontenelle.*

c Prof. E. H. Palmer.

26—27. (26) **that drew swords,** or with drawn swords. **unto . . Edom,** whose protection he might hope to gain; or he made his attack on the part of the forces under the king of Edom. (27) **his eldest son,** his own. **offered him,** to propitiate his god, and, if possible, secure deliverance for his country, by the awful sacrifice,[a] **upon the wall,** to overawe the besiegers. **indignation,**[b] or judgment. They pressed the

Mesha offers his eldest son

a Mic. vi. 7

b "God showed his wrath against Israel (not Judah) by some judg-

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war too ruthlessly if it drove their enemy to such desperation.

The king of Moab sacrifices his son (*v.* 27).—I. The reasons of this extraordinary act. The king resorted to this expedient—1. To propitiate his gods; 2. To intimidate his enemies. II. Some reflections naturally arising from it. We observe—1. How great are the calamities of war; 2. How pitiable is the ignorance of the heathen; 3. How rich are the provisions of the Gospel.[c]

Human sacrifices (*v.* 27).—It might be supposed that such unnatural barbarities as that indicated in the text were confined to nations and tribes very low in the scale of civilisation: but the fact was far otherwise. Not to speak of mythical stories related by classic authors, without any expression of disapproval, we may consult authentic history itself. The author of *A Physician's Problems*, in alluding to the period of Grecian history which produced "such intellectual giants as Pericles, Phidias, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Socrates, Xenophon, and Plato," remarks, "Personally a superficial refinement of manners barely professed to conceal a gross licentious immorality, assuming forms which forbid even a faint allusion in these times; publicly the most shameless, undisguised venality characterised their courts (misnamed) of justice. In these external relations the wars, undertaken on the slighest pretexts, were wars of extermination—the cities were destroyed, and the inhabitants killed or enslaved. Occasionally, even yet, the favour of the gods was propitiated by human sacrifices. On the morning of the battle of Platæa Aristides sent to Themistocles three nephews of Xerxes whom he had taken prisoners; and by the advice of an augur they were sacrificed to Bacchus to purchase his favour."

ment upon them for this act of the king of Moab."—*Wordsworth.*

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"There is no action of man in this life which is not the beginning of so long a chain of consequences, as that no human providence is high enough to give us a prospect to the end."—*Thomas of Malmesbury.*

"Heart-chilling superstition! thou canst glaze even pity's eye with her own frozen tear."—*Coleridge.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

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Elisha multiplies the widow's oil

1—7. (1) **certain women,** Josephus says, *Obadiah's wife.* **did fear,** comp. 1 Ki. xviii. 12. **to take,**[a] as Le. xxv. 39—41. **bondmen,** servants. (2) **I do,** Elisha had no means of paying the debt, and no interest with the king to use for her sake. **pot of oil,**[b] olive oil, an "anointing of oil." (3) **vessels,** for what purpose she could not guess, but in faith she obeyed.[c] (4) **shut the door,**[d] to be undisturbed; the continuity of the pouring must not be broken. (5) **went,** again showing a simple obedience. (6) **stayed,**[e] only bec. lack of vessels to contain it. (7) **man of God,** usual name of the prophet.

A poor and honest woman.—A poor old woman in a house of industry, or poor-house, applied to a collector of a tract association for the tract called "To-day." She wished to pay for it, but money she had none; however, one source remained. The inmates of this house were permitted to raise small plants, such as geraniums, and others of a similar description, which they sold for a few pence, and this trifle enabled them to purchase some extra indulgences. "I have no money," said the poor old woman, "but I will bring you a geranium for it." The plant was accordingly brought. A short time afterwards she called again, and said, "I thank you heartily for that tract. Oh! let me have some more. I will gladly pay for them, and I have

a Ne. v. 2—5.

b "It is indeed remarkable that poor people in Israel who are reduced to the last extremities generally have a little oil left."—*Kitto.*

c Obs. that our Lord required faith from those for whom He wrought miracles.

d Lu. viii. 51—54; Jno. vii. 3, 4; Ac. x. 41.

e "So the supply of the oil of God's grace is never stinted in itself, but the stint is in our hearts."—*Wordsworth.*

one other geranium." What shall we say to the faith of this poor woman? Was it not rich indeed? Let us ask ourselves, Have I so longed for the things of God as this poor woman? And when we feel any reluctance to contribute to our Master's service, let us think of the poor old woman and the other geranium.

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2 Cor. vi. 12. *Bp. Hall, Cont.* v. 1. *Dr. T. Coney*, ii. 101: *Bp. Porteus, Wks.* iii. 151. vv. 1, 2. *Dr. H. Byam*, 120; *Dr T. Sharp, Wks.* i. 263.

8–11. (8) **Shunem,** 1 Ki. i. 3. **great woman,** *i.e.* rich.[a] **constrained,** marg. laid hold on him. (9) **holy man,** more than a prophet. (10) **make,** make ready, prepare. **on the wall,** so an upper chamber.[b] **stool,** or chair; this with the table indic. that the room was to be used for study as well as sleeping. (11) **on a day,** poss. the first, after the arrangement was completed, that Elisha called.

The first chair (*v.* 10).—Sitting on the bare ground is attended by a sensation of damp and other discomforts; a coarsely-woven mat, or some approximation to a carpet, would be the first approach to the luxury of a seat. But, in spite of the attitude assumed by the solemn Turk and grave Sachem, squatting on the ground must have been felt as wanting in dignity, and a position therefore quickly abjured by a people tending towards civilisation. At work in the primeval forest felling trees and clearing the ground, man may first have experienced the comfort of a raised seat by placing himself on the stump of a tree. But, however eligible this support might be in other respects, it laboured under the disadvantage of being immovable; but blocks could be sawed off so as to be movable. A brilliant thought! no sooner conceived than acted upon; and perhaps several generations passed before some great genius hit upon the idea of obviating the cumbersomeness of these heavy solid blocks, by fastening a piece of plank on three supporters, and producing a three-legged stool. Here was progress; but still something was wanted. The aged hunter or shepherd returned from the weary chase or pasture ground; he would fain have cast himself down beside his dogs if he could so far have forfeited the dignity of manhood. He placed his stool so that, seated upon it, he could lean against the wall of his hut; he fell into deep contemplation. Suddenly his fatigue left him under the excitement of a new conception. He had found it—the Eureka!—the *ne plus ultra!* He did not send for a carpenter, for political economy was not yet understood, and the advantages of the division of labour were as yet unknown, but he seized his mallet and pegs, affixed an upright back to his stool, and behold a chair![c]

Elisha is the guest of the Shunammite

a 1 Sa. xxv. 2; 2 Ki. xix. 32.

b "The room prob. projected like a balcony beyond the lower apartments—an arrangement common in the E."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 8. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 400.

"Judge not of actions by their mere effect; dive to the centre, and the cause detect. Great deeds from meanest springs may take their course, and smallest virtues from a mighty source."—*Pope.*

"A woman's heart is just like a lithographer's stone—what is once written upon it cannot be rubbed out."—*Thackeray.*

c Temple Bar.

12–17. (12) **Gehazi,** valley of vision.[a] **stood,** in attitude of reverence. (13) **for us,** indic. that the prophet's servant shared their kindness. **I dwell,** *etc.*, she had no quarrel to settle, and is content with her lot. (14) **no child,** and this was the greatest of all griefs to an Israelitish woman. (15) **call her,** for she had left while Elis. and Gehazi conferred together. (16) **about,** *etc.*, Ge. xviii. 10. **lie,**[b] what was promised seemed to her impossible. (17) **that season,** *v.* 16.

The love of home: its influence on religion and character (*v.* 13).—Consider—I. The peculiar fitness of the family state for the early development and perfection of the natural affections. II. That home is the best school for early mental training. There is a most important training for the mind before it receives any from

Elisha promises her a son

a Gesenius

b Ge. xvii. 17, xviii. 12; Lu. i. 20.

v. 13. *L. Sterne*, ii. 143; *Dr. T. Hunter*, ii. 1; *Dr. H. Blair*, v. 140.

"We should practise all things at two several times,

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the one when the mind is best disposed, the other when it is worst disposed; that by the one you may gain a great step; by the other you may work out the knots and stones of the mind."—*Bacon.*

c A. Blanchard.

"Even the most refined and polished of men seldom conceal any of the sacrifices they make, or what it costs to make them. This is reserved for woman, and it is one of the many proofs they give of their superiority in matters of affection and delicacy."—*Willmott.*

"Women govern us; let us render them perfect; the more they are enlightened, so much the more shall we be. On the cultivation of the mind of woman depends the wisdom of men. It is by women that Nature writes on the hearts of men."—*Sheridan.*

"All the reasonings of men are not worth one sentiment of women."—*Voltaire.*

d Paxton.

the formal process of education. III. The influence of family discipline in regulating and restraining the passions. The constitution of the family implies subjection to their parents on the part of the children. IV. The influence of home in the formation of habits of useful industry. V. That the love of home calls into exercise some of the highest and noblest qualities of our nature in behalf of their well-being and prosperity. VI. That this home-feeling affords a soil congenial to the growth of piety, as exhibited in love to God and our neighbour. Learn—1. The importance of cultivating the love of home; 2. One great source of national degeneracy and corruption: the want of this home-feeling; 3. The cause of discontent in churches.[c]—*The family feeling of Christianity* (*v.* 13).—We adopt this language, "I dwell among mine own people," as—I. An expression of Christian contentment. Moderate desires after wordly good; freedom from immoderate care; cheerful submission to God's providence; dispositions dependent not on outward circumstances, but on the state of the heart. II. A description of the interest which the Christian feels in his fellow Christian. 1. There is a relationship existing between them; 2. This relationship implies that there are benefits to be imparted by all.

The chamber on the wall (*v.* 10).—To most of these houses a smaller one is annexed, which sometimes rises one story higher than the house; and at other times it consists of one or two rooms only and a terrace; while others that are built, as they frequently are, over the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground-floor, which they want, all the conveniences that belong to the house itself. They communicate with the gallery of the house by a door, and by another door which opens immediately from a privy stair, with the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. In these back houses, as they may be called, strangers are usually lodged and entertained, and to them likewise the men are wont to retire from the hurry and noise of their families, to be more at leisure for meditation and amusement; and at other times they are converted into wardrobes and magazines. This annexed building is in the holy Scriptures named *aliah;* and we have reason to believe that the little chamber which the Shunammite built for the prophet Elisha, whither, as the text imforms us, he retired at his pleasure, without breaking in upon the private affairs of the family, or being in his turn interrupted by them in his devotions, was a structure of this kind. It is thus described by the Shunammite herself:—"Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be that when he cometh to us that he shall turn in thither." The internal communication of this chamber with the Shunammite's house, may be inferred, as well from its being built upon the wall, which enclosed her dwelling, as from her having so free access to it, and, at the second invitation, standing in the door, while the prophet announced to her the birth of a son.[d]

on the death of her son she goes to Elisha

18—22. (18) **grown,** old enough to speak. (19) **my head,** being smitten with sunstroke.[a] **a lad,** the one attending the child. (20) **sat,** prob. lay reclining. (21) **bed,** as *v.* 10. (22) **called,** prob. fr. the house, the field lay very near. She keeps her secret. The husband, knowing her anxiety about the boy,

a "The cries of the boy, the part

would at once have met her wish, but he did not think of the child. **to the man,** *etc.*, whose abode she seemed to know.

Death on a mother's knees (*v.* 20).—There are four remarks which this verse proves. I. Children may die. II. Children may die suddenly. What a sudden death this was. III. Children may die although their dearest friends are beside them. IV. Children may die although their friends are good and pray for them to live. Conclusion :—1. Never thinking about death does not prevent its coming ; 2. The way to make death cease to be gloomy is to think much about it in the right connection.[b]

Sunstroke (*v.* 19).—This was doubtless what is called a "stroke of the sun." Mr. Maddon, who speaks of it as a medical man, witnessed instances of it in the desert between Palestine and Egypt, two of which terminated fatally within forty-eight hours. He calls it "the real inflammatory fever, or synocha of Cullen," and adds, "This fever in the desert arises, I imagine, from sudden exposure to the rays of the sun. One of my camel-drivers was attacked during the journey. He complained suddenly of intense pain in the back of his head ; he laid his finger on the spot, and from the moment of this seizure he had a burning fever. . . . All the symptoms of this complaint are those of *coup de soleil* in an aggravated form." The sun of Palestine is strong enough to produce this effect, according to the testimony of various travellers. This is particularly the case in the plains, such as those of Jericho and Esdraelon. In or on the borders of the latter Shunem was situated, and in a battle which was fought by the army of Baldwin IV., near Tiberias, on its eastern border, William of Tyre relates that more soldiers were slain by the sun than by the sword.

23—26. (23) **wherefore,** not realising the serious illness of the child, and supposing she wanted to attend some religious service. He could not well spare the ass and lad fr. the harvest-field. **well,** peace! don't trouble me just now with inquiries. (24) **drive,** the lad ran by the side.[a] **slack . . riding,** better, *delay me not in my riding.* (25) **Carmel,** a ride of five or six hours. (26) **it is well,** partly the usual salutation. partly keeping her message in to deliver to the prophet himself.

Submission under trial (*v.* 26).—I invite your attention to—I. The trial this woman endured. In it were—1. The disappointment of a strong desire ; 2. The blasting of a bright hope ; 3. The tearing of her tenderest affections. Her child had been taken from her. II. Her conduct under it. Notice—1. She is filled with the most pungent sorrow ; 2. But she acquiesces in the will of God ; 3. Further, she cleaves to God. She may have gone to Elisha to seek—(1) Deliverance from her trial ; (2) Strength to bear it ; (3) The sanctification of it. III. The grounds which may produce and sustain such a course of conduct. A consideration of—1. What we are who endure the trial ; 2. Who He is who sends the trial ; 3. The purpose the trial is designed to serve.[b]—*Is it well?*—Sketch pictorially the history of the child : only child, object of much love. Child at play in harvest-field. The sunstroke. "My head, my head!" The child is carried home and nursed. Dies in its mother's arms. Her sorrow and brave resolution. Her journey. The question. Apply it to the Sunday-school scholar. I. What is included in that word "well"? Bodily health, temporal circumstances, mental train-

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affected, and the season of the year, make it prob. that he had been overtaken by a stroke of the sun. Pain, stupor, and inflammatory fever are the symptoms of the disease, wh. is often fatal."—*Jamieson.*

b Dr. T. Edmond.

For sunstroke, comp. Ps. cxxi. 6 ; Is. xlix. 10.

"Though the sun scorches us sometimes, and gives us the headache, we do not refuse to acknowledge that we stand in need of his warmth."—*Philip de Mornay.*

"Night brings out stars, as sorrows show us truths."—*Bailey.*

Gehazi is sent to meet her

a "It is usual for women to ride on asses accompanied by a servant, who walks behind and drives the beast with his stick, goading the animal at the speed required by his mistress."—*Jamieson.*

v. 23. *E. Blencowe,* ii. 400 ; *F. W. Fowle,* i. 28.

vv. 25, 26. *Dr. P. Doddridge.* Wks. iii. 305 ; *J. Cawood,* i. 155.

v. 26. *J. Hill, Lond. T. Soc. Ss.* 245 ; *H. Blunt, Elisha, W. F. Hook, Cont. of the Day,* 140 ; *A. Roberts,* ii. 65.

b G. D. Macgregor. "I cried, 'Lord, spare my child!'",

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He did, but not as I meant. He snatched it from danger, and took it to His own home."—*Cecil.*

"Flowers never emit so sweet and strong a fragrance as before a storm. Beauteous soul! when a storm approaches thee, be as fragrant as a sweet-smelling flower."—*Richter.*

"To feel, to love, to suffer, to devote herself, will always be the text of the life of woman."—*Balzac.*

"Women are never stronger than when they arm themselves with their weakness."—*Madame du Deffand.*

Elisha returns with her, Gehazi preceding

a Spk. Com.

Comp Mat. xviii. 29; Mk. v. 22, vii. 25; Lu. viii. 41; Jno. xi. 32.

b Some think he expected the laying of the staff to restore the life. Some think he intended by some immediate act to assuage the grief of the mother. Some think he intended to show that God only could restore to life, and expected the failure of the staff.

c Ir. Bonar.

Elisha restores her son to life

a Ja. v. 16.

b 1 Ki. xvii. 23; Lu. vii. 15.

ing, moral character, salvation of the soul. In this highest sense—II. It may be well with the child. God has provided the way of salvation; the Spirit convinces of the need of salvation; Jesus has died to purchase a full salvation; the Bible shows us how to secure salvation. III. It ought to be well with the child. It is his duty to repent and believe. Means of grace, Sunday-schools, etc., intended to help him. IV. It must be well with the child if it is to be well with the man. Man's life grows out of child's character, etc. Child is father of the man, as acorn of the oak. 1. If any ask us this question of you what are we to say? 2. If it is not well, Christ says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" 3. If it is well give God the praise, and praise Him by striving to be and to do good.

Dinah Dowdney.—Miss Dinah Dowdney, of Portsea, who died at nine years of age, one day in her illness said to her aunt, with whom she lived, "When I am dead I should like Mr. Griffin to preach a sermon to children to persuade them to love Jesus Christ, to obey their parents, not to tell lies, but to think of dying and going to heaven. I have been thinking," said she, "what text I should like him to preach from; 2 Kings iv. 26. You are the Shunammite, Mr. G. is the prophet, and I am the Shunammite's child. When I am dead I dare say you will be grieved, though you need not. The prophet will come to see you; and when he says, 'How is it with the child?' you will say, 'It is well.' I am sure it will then be well with me, for I shall be in heaven singing the praises of God. You ought to think it well too." Mr. G. accordingly fulfilled the wish of this pious child.

27—31. (27) **caught,** *etc.*, "to lay hold on the knees or feet has always been thought in the E. to add force to supplication."[a] **vexed,** bitter with some great sorrow. **Lord hath hid,** showing his dependence on immediate inspirations. (28) **a son,** this question reveals her trouble. (29) **my staff,** an official rod. The reason for sending it has been variously presented.[b] **salute him not,** as Lu. x. 4. (30) **leave thee,** she wanted his presence in the chamber of the dead. (31) **hearing,** marg. *attention.*

Salutations in the East (*v.* 29).—With us a brief wayside salutation does not hinder, but in the East it does. As we were turning in by a narrow, dark, arched lane, my donkey-man suddenly sprung aside, with a loud shout of delight, and left me. Of course I halted, not knowing my way. Some donkeys were coming on in front, and my driver had seen in the foremost of the riders a brother or friend, who was returning from a journey. My donkey-man was on foot, but this mattered not. In a moment he leaped up and seized his friend round the neck, hugging him most strenuously, and kissing him first on one side of the face and then on the other. This mutual operation being over they inquired after each other's health, and then went on their way.[c]

32—37. (32) **his bed,** *vv.* 10, 21. **shut the door,** as *v.* 4, to secure uninterruption. **prayed,**[a] 1 Ki. xvii. 21. (34) **lay,** *etc.*, apparently exerting himself to restore breath. **stretched,** prostrated himself; coming close to communicate living warmth. (35) **to and fro,** to increase his own warmth. (36) **take up thy son, now alive again.**[b] (37) **fell,** *etc.*, in overwhelming gratitude.

Death of children.—Doth not that truly live at this day which was truly lovely in those darlings? Didst thou, O my fond heart, love beauty, sweetness, ingenuity, incarnate? And canst thou not love it still in the fountain, and enjoy it in a more immediate and compendious way? Thy body, indeed, cannot taste sweetness in the abstract, nor see beauty except it be exhibited in matter: but canst not thou, O my soul, taste the uncreated goodness and sweetness, except it be embodied and have some material thing to commend it to thy palate? be ashamed that thou, being a spirit as to thy constitution, art no more spiritual in thy affections and operations. Dost thou with sadness reflect upon those sweet smiles, and that broken rhetoric, with which those babes were wont to entertain thee? 1. Consider duly what real contentment thou hast lost in losing those. For what were those things to thy real happiness? Thou hast lost nothing but what it was no solid pleasure nor true felicity to enjoy, nothing but what the most sensual and brutal souls do enjoy as much as thou. 2. Be ashamed rather that thou didst enjoy them in such a gross and unspiritual manner. Art thou troubled because any earthly interest is violated? Rather be ashamed that thou hadst and cherishedst any such interest.[a]

38–41. (38) **Gilgal,** ch. ii. 1. **dearth,**[a] Ge. xli. 54. **sitting,** receiving instructions. **great pot,**[b] the only one in the house. (39) **herbs,** growing wild, such as mallow, asparagus, etc. **wild vine,** not real vine, but the *Colocynth*, or the *echalium elaterium*, or squirting cucumber. **lap full,** or shawl full. **knew them not,** as to their poisonous quality. (40) **death,** *etc.*,[c] the taste was so bitter, they feared poisoning. (41) **meal,** not without a miracle, competent to change the quality of the ingredients.

The poisoned pottage (*v.* 40).—Consider this miracle—I. In itself. 1. It was remarkably well-timed; 2. It was of a discriminating description; 3. It was a real miracle, a true sign. No ordinary man could have cured the poisoned pottage by a handful of mere meal. II. As illustrative of God's ways, whether in providence or in grace. God is pleased, as a rule, to effect great results by small means. We see here also the timeliness and discrimination of God's help, its completness; and we have an illustration of the great reflex benefits of the Gospel. Elisha came as a guest; but became the true host.[d]

Wild vine (*v.* 39).—The word for "wild vine" is used here as it is vernacularly, especially in the Western Hemisphere, for any creeping plant having tendrils and vine-shaped leaves. If we admit this Gilgal to be the Gilgal by Jordan, between Jericho and the Dead Sea, where Joshua and the children of Israel first halted, we shall see that the prophet and his party had come down from the upper country of Benjamin, near Bethel, to the low-lying sandy plain of Gilgal, near the Jordan, where the vegetation is extremely different from that of the central hills of the Holy Land. Here it resembles that of tropical deserts; there it is the ordinary flora of Syria. Now there is a species of wild gourd or melon, *Cucumis prophetarum*, which is common in the hill country, and which when green is sliced and boiled as a vegetable, but which is not found in the lower plains. But here its place is taken by a plant extremely similar in appearance, but very different in its qualities, the

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"One can never be the judge of another's grief. That which is a sorrow to one, to another is joy. Let us not dispute with any one concerning the reality of his sufferings; it is with sorrows as with countries,—each man has his own."—*Chateaubriand.*

"Sorrow seems sent for our instruction, as we darken the cages of birds when we would teach them to sing."—*Richter.*

c Shaw.

the poisoned pottage healed

a 2 Ki. viii. 1.

b "As it is most likely that the Jewish would resemble the Egyptian 'great pot,' it is seen by the monumental paintings to have been a large goblet, with two long legs, which stood over the fire on the floor."—*Jamieson.*

c "It was not only nauseous but noxious."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 38. *Dr. T. Randolph, A View, &c.*, ii. 1.

d Homilist.

"Are the wages of sin preferable to those of virtue? Is death more eligible than life, or is hell preferable to heaven? Are the pleasures of sense more desirable than the sweets of innocence, than the love and favour of God than the rivers of pleasure

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at His right hand, the crown of life, the eternal weight of glory?" —*Wogan.*

e Dr. Tristram.

colocynth (*Citrullus colocynthis*), a native of the Sahara and the Scinde deserts, and frequently found on all the sandy salt plains near the sea in the Levant. This plant I found in great profusion both near Gilgal and by the shores of the Dead Sea, at Engedi, and at the south end. Here we have the mistake at once explained. The prophet's attendant, a native of the hill country, probably of Samaria, was of course ignorant of the plants of the Dead Sea. He finds the colocynth growing just in the very spot where it still flourishes: mistaking it for the wholesome gourd of his own hills, he gathers it for the pottage; and no wonder that the people, when they tasted the bitter and nauseous medicine, exclaim, "O man of God, there is death in the pot."[e]

a hundred men miraculously fed

a Mat. xiv. 19—21; Jno. vi. 9—13.

"Men little crave in this short journey to the silent grave; and the poor peasant, bless'd with peace and health, I envy more than Crœsus with his wealth." — *H. K. White.*

b Shakespeare.

42—44. (42) **Baal-shalisha,** 1 Sa. ix. 4. **in the husk,** better in his bag or scrip. (43) **servitor,** or attendant Gehazi. **hundred men,** comp. our Lord's feeding five thousand.[a] **(44) and left,** after being fully satisfied.

Relief from want.—

Take this purse, thou whom the heaven's plagues
Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier. Heavens deal so still,
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see,
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough.[b]

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

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Naaman

the little maid

1—3. (1) **Naaman,** *pleasant.* **honourable,** or honoured, highly valued. **deliverance,** no account of this is found in Scrip.[a] **leper,**[b] not however so bad as to require to be isolated. Poss. too the Israelite law of leprosy did not apply in Syria. (2) **by companies,** little parties making raids for the sake of plunder. **maid,** prob. little more than a child. (3) **recover him,** heal him; cleanse away this disease; *gather in,* receive into the camp.

a "The Assyrian monarch had pushed his conquests as far as Syria exactly at this period, bringing into subjection all the kings of these parts. But his conquest was not permanent. Syria revolted after a few years, and made herself independent. It was prob. in this war of independence that Naaman had distinguished himself." — *Spk. Com.*

b Le. xiii. 2—46. 2 Co xii. 7.

The cure of Naaman.—In the story of Naaman there are four parties concerned. Give your attention to—I. The servants. 1. The little maid. (1) Her religious education; (2) The prudence of her demeanour; (3) The tender interest she felt in her master's welfare. 2. The servant who accompanied Naaman; 3. The servant of the prophet. II. The soldier. Mark—1. His rank; 2. His malady; 3. His mistake; 4. His pride and vanity; 5. His prudence, in listening to his servants; 6. His obedience; 7. His gratitude; 8. His infirmity (*v.* 18). III. The prophet. 1. His regard for the Divine honour; 2. His dignity; 3. His disinterestedness; 4. His antipathy to sin. IV. The prophet's God. 1. His sovereignty; 2. His Divine providence; 3. His disapprobation of sin, and love of holiness. Conclusion:—(1) Servants, learn integrity; (2) Masters, learn courteousness; (3) Ministers of God, learn disinterestedness; (4) All learn to trust Providence.[c]—*Drawbacks to human happiness* (*v.* 1). —**I.** Let us consider some few things suggested by this word

c J. Stratten.

"but" in relation to—1. Domestic comfort; 2. Social life; 3. Moral life. II. Some of the effects of these buts upon the minds of others and upon our minds. III. The Divine compensation and cure of some of these drawbacks. 1. The compensation; 2. The cure.—*A little maid* (*v.* 2).—I. The little maid herself. Not to be despised because a servant. II. Her home: the land of Israel. III. Her master: a great man, but a leper. IV. Her usefulness. Several things insured her. 1. She was pitiful; 2. She was thoughtful; 3. She had faith.[d]

A captive child (*v.* 2).—As Dr. Cornelius was riding through a wilderness in the West, he met a party of Indian warriors, just returning from one of their excursions of fire and blood. One of these warriors, of fierce and fiendlike aspect, led a child of five years of age, whom they had taken captive. "Where are the parents of the child?" said Dr. Cornelius. "Here they are," replied the savage warrior, as with one hand he exhibited the bloody scalps of a man and a woman, and with the other brandished his tomahawk in all the exultation of gratified revenge. That same warrior became a disciple of Jesus Christ, a humble man of piety and of prayer. His tomahawk was laid aside, and was never again crimsoned with the blood of his fellow men. His wife became a member of the same church with himself, and their united prayers ascended, morning and evening, from the family altar. Their daughters were amiable and humble, and devoted followers of the blessed Redeemer, trained up under the influence of a father's and a mother's prayers, for the society of angels and saints.

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Bp. Hall, Cont., J. Saurin, vi. 1; *D. B. Langley, Lect. on Naaman.*

v. 1. *Bp. Hickman*, i. 298; *J. Fawcett*, 169; *G. Innes*, 21; *W. C. Wilson*, ii. 293; *Dr. Wordsworth*, i. 1; *J. H. Smith*, ii. 221; *E. Blencowe*, i. 350; *Dr. S. Carr*, i. 239.

v. 2. *Dr. H. Hughes*, ii. 427.

vv. 2, 3. *T. Gisborne*, 249; *J. W. Warter*, ii. 553; *J. H. Gurney*, 246; *Dr. R. Gordon*, 307.

d J. Bolton.

4—7. (4) **one went in,** read *he*, i.e. Naaman, **his lord,** the king of Syria. (5) **go to, go,** set out at once. **letter,** at once a certificate and a request. **ten talents,** value about £3,000. **six thousand,** *etc.*, value uncertain. **changes,** *etc.*, in the E. usual gifts of honour.[a] (6) **saying,** this was the part of the letter concerning Naaman. The king was prob. Jehoram. (7) **rent his clothes,** in excitement and annoyance.[b] **a quarrel,** ground on wh. to make a quarrel that may give occasion for war.

the king of Syria's letter to the king of Israel

a Ge. xli. 42, xlv. 22; Es. vi. 8; Da. v. 7.

b Comp. 2 Sa. xiii. 19, xv. 32; Ezr. ix. 3; 2 Chr. xxxiv. 27; Jer. xxxvi. 24.

Naaman's search for the prophet (*vv.* 5, 8).—The problem for Naaman to solve was how to reach the prophet, and how to induce him to effect a cure. Four persons are before us in the history. I. The Syrian general, who teaches us the ignorance of man in his efforts to obtain the higher blessings of life. He went—1. From a king; 2. To a king; 3. Like a king. II. The king of Syria. He writes a letter. 1. The superscription: 2. The contents: humiliating, extravagant, insulting. III. The king of Israel. 1. His surprise; 2. His feelings: he feels his weakness. His fear. IV. The prophet Elisha. 1. How he acted: sent, did not go; 2. His message rebukes the king; 3. It referred also to Naaman: "send him to me." Learn:—If we would be restored to spiritual health—(1) There is only One who can make us whole; (2) We must be saved in His way, not in ours; (3) In going to Him we must lay aside self-importance.

Life the gift of God.—I need not remind you that this is the exclusive prerogative of Godhead. It is so in the nature of things. It is frequently and explicitly affirmed to be so in the sacred Scriptures. Man's power is very mighty, I know; but it stops short of this. He can put a bone before him, and from a

"Pride signifies such an exalted idea of ourselves as leads to self-esteem, and to contempt of others It is self-admiration—self-doating It differs from vanity thus: pride causes us to value ourselves; vanity makes us anxious for applause. Pride renders a man odious; vanity makes him ridiculous." — *J. A. James.*

"Pride is a vice

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which cleaveth so fast unto the hearts of men, that if we were to strip ourselves of all faults one by one we should undoubtedly find it the very last and hardest to put off."- *Hooker.*

c Dr. Punshon.

Naaman is told by Elisha to wash in Jordan

a Marg., move his hand up and down over the place. This indicates that the leprosy was *local.*

vv. 9, 10. *J. E. Riddle*, 296.

v. 10. *H. Blunt, Elisha.*

vv. 10–14. *Bp. Shuttleworth*, ii. 1.

v. 11. *M. Hobery. Wks.* i. 222; *E. Putteson*, 155.

b H. C. Hardiman.

c A. Maclaren B.A.

"Pride is in the front of those sins which God hates, and are an abomination to Him. ... Pride is the most pernicious of all vices: for whereas any single vice is opposite to its contrary virtue—uncleanness expels chastity; covetousness, liberality — pride, like an infectious disease, taints the sound parts, corrupts the actions of every virtue, and deprives them of their true grace and glory."—*Dr. Bates.*

bone, a fossil bone, he can construct a massive elephant, and, with Promethean ambition, he can shape its features faultlessly, and by clockwork, or by galvanism, he can stimulate a strange hypocrisy of life: but he cannot draw down the vital breath; he cannot breathe the living fire. His province is combination and embellishment. By Divine authority, plainly conferred, he may now and then be permitted to resuscitate; to breathe is beyond his power. That belongs only to God. "Am I God," said the frightened king of Israel, "to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send to me to recover a man of his leprosy?"[c]

8—11. (8) **to me,** Elisha sets himself forth as vindicating the honour of Jehovah, the true God of Israel. (9) **with his horses,** *etc.*, in great state, as if to make a profound impression. (10) **sent a messenger,** to humble Naaman and make him willing to receive healing as a gift of grace, not a purchase of his grandeur or his gifts. **go,** *etc.*, comp. Jno. ix. 7. (11) **wroth,** at the slight offered him. **strike,** or wave.[a]

The Syrian leper (*vv.* 8—14).—I. The causes which induced Naaman to reject the remedy prescribed by Elisha. 1. He expected a direct communication of supernatural influence; 2. He sought, in the means appointed, that virtue which belonged to the promise of God; 3. He shrank from the humiliation, involved, as he conceived, in the use of those means. II. The unreasonableness of his conduct. 1. It was not for him to dictate the method of his recovery; 2. He ought to have tried the means before denouncing them; 3. He should have sacrificed his feelings to his good. Learn:—(1) The influence of self-government; (2) The value of faithful counsel; (3) The advantages of religious knowledge.[b] *Pride overcoming want* (*v.* 11).—Consider—I. What in this man's eyes was a fault; what to clearer vision is a glory; the utter indifference of the Gospel to all distinctions among men. Naaman wanted to be treated as a great man that happened to be a leper; Elisha treated him as a leper that happened to be a great man. II. The naked simplicity of God's Gospel. It was very like a *heathen* to crave for some external ritual of cleansing. It was very like a *man* to long for something visible and tangible for his wavering confidence to lay hold upon. It was very like *God* to contradict the desire and to give him instead only a promise to grasp and a command to obey. The like apparent antagonism between men's wishes and God's ways meets us in the Gospel; and the like correspondence between God's ways and men's real wants. III. The utter rejection by the Gospel of all our co-operation in our own cleansing. The Gospel rejects our co-operation just because it demands our faith.[c]

Display of pride.—Goldsmith tells of a mandarin who appeared with jewels on every part of his robe. He was once accosted by a sly old fellow, who, following him through several streets, bowed often to the ground, and thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarin; "I never gave you any of my jewels." "No," replied the other; "but you have let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself; so the only difference between us is, that you have the trouble of watching them; and that is an employment I don't much desire."

12—14. (12) **Abana,** or *Amana*, the *Barady*.[a] **Pharpar,** the *Away*, *Awaaj*, or *Awodsch*, wh. flows thro' the plain at the S. of Damascus.[b] **better,** not as having healing virtue, but as "brighter, clearer, and colder." (13) **came near,** watching for their opportunity. **my father,** special term of reverence. **great thing,** wh. would have required painful effort, if you could have trusted him then, why not trust him now? (14) **flesh . . clean,** the skin disease was wholly gone.[c]

Is there not another way? (*v.* 12).—Sinners dislike—I. The plan of the Gospel. 1. Self-abandonment; 2. Salvation by faith. II. Its objects. 1. Salvation from sin; 2. The renewal of the heart. III. The means to be used. 1. Self-denial; 2. humility; 3. Earnestness; 4. Publicity.[d]—*If slaves, still men* (*v.* 13).—I. Naaman's admirable servants. Had these servants been sycophants they would have applauded his indignation—had they been cowards, they would have feared to interpose—had they been callous, they would have let Naaman take his course. But they were wise and generous men. They risk all consequences, and practically rebuke his folly. II. Their irresistible logic. Do we not share Naaman's folly, and need the rebuke he received? Let us be content with God's way. If it does seem to us even puerile, at least it answers its end. (A raven bore the prophet's meal as successfully as an archangel could have done.) III. Their success. Through them Naaman's proud will is bent. Their words prevail. Conclusion:—1. In giving the word of exhortation, let us remember our own frailty: not as an oracle, but as a friend, let us chide; 2. In receiving it, let us be meek: at the time we may think it hard and uncalled for, but by-and-by we may see its fitness.[e]

Leprosy.—The leprosy exhibits itself on the surface of the skin, but it infects at the same time the marrow and the bones; so much so that the extreme joints and parts of the system gradually lose their power, and some of them drop from the body and give it a mutilated and dreadful appearance. From these circumstances there can be no doubt that the disease originates and spreads its ravages internally before it makes its appearance on the external parts of the body. Indeed, we have reason to believe that it is a long time concealed in the system; for instance, in infants until they arrive at the age of puberty; and in adults, as many as three or four years, till at last it gives the fearful indications on the skin of having already gained a deep-rooted and permanent existence.[f]

15—19. (15) **returned,** humble and grateful. **now I know,** *etc.*,[a] this acknowledgment of Jehovah the prophet would look for first. **a blessing,** a present as testimony of gratitude. (16) **none,** the servant of God would be wholly free from the charge of using the power of God for his own personal advantage. (17) **burden of earth,** so he thought to turn Syria at least for himself into Jehovah's land.[b] (18) **Rimmon,** poss. the sun, the chief object of worship to the Syrians.[c] **leaneth on my hand,** ch. vii. 2, 17. (19) **in peace,** accepted of God in this request.

Elisha's benediction (*v.* 19).—Keil remarks that the older theologians mostly found in these words an approval of the course Naaman intended to follow, and as it was not to be supposed that a prophet would sanction participation in idolatrous ceremonies, they devised two explanations. By the first of

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Naaman washes and is healed

a "Rises in the Antilibanus, flows westward fr. its foot, and forms the oasis within which Damascus is placed." — *Spk. Com.*

b Robinson.

c Job xxxiii. 25; Lu. iv. 27.

d W. W. Wythe.

v. 12. *Dr. J. Napleton*, i. 212; *Dr. J. Nance*, 269; *Dr. T. T. Trevor*, 13; *J. T. Robinson*, 74; *J. Calthrop*, i. 302; *A. Watson*, 215.

v. 13. *Dr. J. Tottie*, 72; *I. Priest*, 103; *J. Doughty*, 45; *J. Cennick*, 1; *F. Webb*, i. 155; *J. Cooke*, i. 367; *H. F. Fell*, 24; *J. H. Pott*, ii 247; *Dr. R. Gordon*, 329; *T. T. Haverfield*, i. 91; *W. Norris*, iii. 279; *J. H. Hutton*, 159; *A. Williams*, iii. 179; *T. F. Dibdin*, 450; *A. Gatty*, i. 7.

e R. A. Griffin.

vv. 13, 14. *Adn. Chapman*, i. 74; *W. Keating*, 88; *Bp. Babington*, *Wks.* 289.

f Dr. Jahn.

Naaman offers a gift to Elisha

a Da. ii. 47, iii. 29, vi. 26, 27.

b Obs. the notion that gods belonged to particular territories. 1 Ki. xxii. 23.

c "Worshipped with the symbol of the pomegranate (*rimmon*), the emblem of fruitfulness. The name seems to be abbreviated

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fr. Hadad-rimmon." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 15. *J. M. Wynyard*, 186.

vv. 15, 16. *J. Fawcett*, i. 183.

vv. 15—17. *W. C. Wilson*, ii. 322.

v. 17. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* ii. 1.

vv. 17—19. *Theo. Lindsey*, ii. 343.

Gehazi follows Naaman and by falsehood obtains a gift

a 1 Ti. vi. 10.

b "The well-known hill by Elisha's house." —*Keil.*

"We may conjecture that the hill wh. must have lain bet. Elisha's house and the place where Gehazi overtook Naaman, interrupted the view in this direction, and that Gehazi dismissed Naaman's servants at this point lest they should be seen from his master's residence." — *Spk. Com.*

v. 20. *J. Fawcett*, i. 196; *Bp. Mant*, iii. 275; *Sir G. H. Rose, Serip. Res.*

vv. 20—27. *WJay*, iii. 284.

Gehazi punished

a Comp. v. 3, 8.

b Trans., "Went not out my beloved when some one (viz., Naaman) turned from his lofty chariot to meet thee?"—*Ewald.*

c "Not his covetousness alone

these it was attempted to show that his words were retrospective, referring only to what he had done, not to what he was about to do. By the other, an imagined distinction was drawn between "actual worship" and bowing for "state convenience." But the answer was really only the usual form of leave-taking. For Elisha had no special commission to the heathen nations around Judæa. He was appointed to convert Israel from idolatry, and bring them back to the worship of the true God. As a parting benediction, he wished that Jehovah's peace might rest on the Syrian general, and thus committed him to the Divine guidance without answering his closing words.

20—24. (20) **this Syrian,** Naaman argues that he might have taken advantage of a heathen. **take somewhat,** secure something for myself.[a] (21) **lighted down,** stepped fr. his chariot; this for so great a man was an act of singular courtesy. (22) **sent me,** a deliberate lie. **from Mount Ephraim,** where were two schools of prophets, Bethel and Gilgal. (23) **two talents,** this extra gift showed Naaman's anxiety to free himself fr. obligation. (24) **tower,** marg. *secret place:* perhaps the *hill*[b] where Elisha dwelt.

Falsehood (*v.* 22).—Falsehood is like a house built of wretchedly bad materials. It may stand for a time, with care and attention; but at last, down it comes, probably burying its inmates in the ruins. He who tells a lie to gain some fancied present benefit, is like a very poor man who borrows a shilling on Monday, under the utterly irredeemable promise to pay ten shillings for the loan on Saturday. Gold-fish swimming about in a glass bowl, or bees in a glass beehive, may as easily screen themselves from observation by the bystanders, as our inward thoughts and sins can hide themselves from the sight of God. In the General Post Office sorting-room there is a hole in the wall, darkened by a grating, through which a frequent watch is kept upon the letter-sorters. Notwithstanding this, deceit often goes undetected by man, but never undetected by the eye of God. A confirmed liar is like a crooked, knotty tree, fit only for the fire. We despise and discard a watch that never tells the true time; a ruler that will not enable you to rule a straight line; a portrait that is not faithful: so God will, at the judgment day, dismiss from His presence "all liars." It would be well for all liars like Ananias and Gehazi to remember a remark once made by a little boy to his father, who was meditating a theft of potatoes out of a field. The father looked east, west, north and south, and seeing no one, began to pull up the roots. "Father," said the lad, "there is one way you forgot to look." "Where?" asked the alarmed man. "Up, father."

25—27. (25) **went in,** *etc.*, attending to his duty as if nothing had happened. Servants remained in the presence of their master when not sent on errands by him. **whence,** giving Gehazi opportunity of self-recollection.[a] **no wither,** Heb. not hither or thither. (26) **mine heart,** my beloved,[b] *i.e.* was I not with thee in spirit? **a time,** *etc.*, considering the condition of Israel before God, mourning was more suitable than feasting. Also time for rightly influencing a heathen. (27) **for ever,**[c] through distant generations. **white as snow,** severe form of leprosy.[d]

Gehazi, the false prophet-disciple.—1. His disposition. II. His

procedure. III. His punishment.[e] *Gehazi.*—I. Gehazi's heart. II. Gehazi's crime. III. Gehazi's punishment.[f]—*The prophet's regard for the times.*—I. Elisha regarded this as a time for Israel to humble herself before the Lord, not to feast. II. He regarded it as a time in which the mercy of God should be manifested to a heathen: not a time for making a profit out of a heathen.

Punishment of Gehazi (*v.* 27).—This was said by Elisha to Gehazi, because he ran after Naaman (who had been cured of his leprosy), and said his master had sent him to take "a talent of silver and two changes of garments," and because he actually took possession of them. There is an account in the Hindoo book called *Seythu-Purāna* of a leper who went to Ramiseram to bathe, in order to be cured of his complaint. He performed the required ceremonies, but the priests refused his offerings. At last a Brahmin came: in the moment of temptation he took the money, and immediately the leprosy of the pilgrim took possession of his body! This complaint is believed to come in consequence of great sin, and therefore no one likes to receive any reward or present from a person infected with leprosy.[g]

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was punished, but also the ill-use made of the prophet's name, and the attempt to conceal it by lying."—*Keil.*

d Ex. iv. 6; Nu. xii. 10; 2 Ki. xv. 5

v. 26. *Dr. T. Horton*, 24; *H. Blunt, Elisha*; *Bp. Heber*, ii. 178.

v. 27. *R. Warner, Old Ch. of Eng. Prin.* iii. 53; *A. Roberts*, v. 63; *Dr. C. Wordsworth*, i. 21.

e Bendr.

f Krummacher.

g Roberts.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

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1—7. (1) **sons,** *etc.*, connect with ch. iv. 44. **dwell with thee,** *lit.* sit before thee. The attitude of scholars before a master.[a] The place was prob. Jericho, bec. of its proximity to Jordan (*v.* 4). **too strait,** limited for the number of scholars. (2) **beam,** the valley of Jordan was well wooded.[b] (3) **be content,** or willing. **to Jordan,** *i.e.* the banks of Jor. (5) **ax head,** *lit. the iron.*[c] **borrowed,** or begged. (6) **did swim,** we cannot doubt that a miracle is intended.[d] (7) **put . . hand,** so it was not far from the bank.

The raising of the axe.—I. We are taught in what seasons we may expect Divine interposition. In seasons of—1. Legitimate anxiety; 2. Legitimate labour. II. The persons who assuredly enjoy God's special providence. 1. His own people; 2. Especially, the earnest and devoted. III. The manner of Divine interposition. 1. God gave Elisha power to befriend the disconsolate youth; 2. Though the help was miraculous, the means were very simple; 3. Though the help was miraculous, the young man had to put forth his own effort. IV. The issue of the event. The axe was restored.[e]—*The borrowed axe* (*v.* 5).—Describe scene in wood, men felling trees, axe-head flies off, and falls into water; vain efforts to recover it; great sorrow. Why? It was a borrowed axe. The master told. The miracle. Subject, "Take care of, and return, borrowed things." Otherwise, consider—I. The injury done to the lender. 1. Loss of, or injury to, property; 2. His temper soured, vexed with loss, etc.; 3. His benevolence marred—he will not lend again—grows selfish; 4. He gets an ill name for not being obliging. II. The injury done to others. If kindness be thus abused, the needy can never borrow. Hence the needy are injured, the innocent suffer for the guilty. (*Ill.* Some one borrows an umbrella and does not return it, the lender resolves to lend no more; presently a friend is overtaken by a shower, catches a cold, etc.). III. The injury done to yourself. Moral sense blunted. Vain excuses invented. Ashamed to meet

the borrowed axe

a "Before the principal temple of the Lamasery at Kounboum, there is a large square court, paved with broad stones, and surrounded with twisted columns, covered with coloured sculptures. In this enclosure the Lamas assemble at the lecture-hour; here they sit, according to their rank, upon the bare stones, in winter, the cold, the frost, and the snow; and in summer, the rain, and the sun's heat. The professors only are under shelter; they sit upon a platform, covered with a tent." — *Huc's Travels.*

b De. xxxiv. 3; Ju. i. 16, iii. 13.

c "The Jews prob. acquired a knowledge of the smelting process

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In Egypt, where iron was employed at least from the time of the third Rameses." — *Spk. Com.*

d Thenius suggests that Elisha saw the axe-head at the bottom of the water, and reached it with a long stick.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

v. 5 *J. Cousins*, ii. 3; *J. Cochrane*, 221.

v. 6. *Crit. Sac. Thes., De ferro natante*, i. 529.

e R. A. Griffin.

f Hive.

the lender. Prevarication, falsehood. You cannot borrow again. Get a bad name for carelessness, etc. Learn—1. Do not borrow if you can help it; 2. Always return promptly and uninjured; 3. Be willing to lend; 4. God has lent you many things—life, etc.: in what form have you returned them? 5. Be more careful of things borrowed than of your own: with the latter you can do what you please, not so with what belongs to another; 6. God will call you to account for what He has lent you.*f*

Honesty in borrowing (*v.* 5).—The Rothschild family, whose purse has maintained war and brought about peace, owes all its greatness to one act of extraordinary honesty under trust. When the prince of Hesse Cassel fled through Frankfort in the time of the French Revolution, he requested Moses Rothschild—a Jewish banker, of limited means, but good reputation—to take charge of his money and jewels. The Jew accepted the trust, but would give no receipt, as he would not answer for their safety in such dangerous times. Presently the French entered Frankfort and took Mr. Rothschild's money, but did not discover the property of the prince of Cassel—worth several hundred thousand pounds—which Mr. Rothschild had buried in his garden. On their leaving the town, the money was dug up, and a small portion of it was used. The banker prospered, gained much wealth of his own, and a few years after informed the prince that his money was safe, and offered to pay him five per cent. interest upon it. Impressed with his fidelity, and to mark his gratitude, he recommended the honest Jew to various European sovereigns as a money-lender.

the king of Israel warned by Elisha

a Spk. Com.

b Wordsworth.

c Illus. duty of spiritual watchmen, see Eze. iii. 17, xxxiii. 7; 1 Co. xvi. 13; 2 Ti. iv. 5; He. xiii. 7; 1 Pe. v. 8; Re. ii. 2, 3.

d Hive.

"I could write down twenty cases," says a pious man, "when I wished God had done otherwise than He did; but which I now see had I my own will, would have led to extensive mischief."

e Stackhouse.

8—12. (8) **king of Syria,** prob. Benhadad. (9) **pass not,** neglect not;*a* do not omit to guard;*b* or beware of the ambush set in such a place. (10) **sent,** *etc.*, this favours the explanation that he occupied it before the Syr. could get to it. (11) **this thing,** the failure of his secret schemes. **which of us,** suspecting treachery in some member of his council. (12) **none,** Heb. *no, not so.* **bedchamber,** fig. for the utmost secrecy.*c*

God's knowledge of the wicked used for the advantage of the good (*v.* 12).—I. The secret counsel: king of Syria's counsel with his servants (*v.* 8). 1. Secret: thought no one knew; 2. Aim: to invade Israel, waste the country, etc.; 3. Plan: place of camp, point of attack, etc. II. The Unseen Listener—God. He hears every idle word that men speak; no place exempt from His presence; even the secrets of his private chamber told Elisha by inspiration: the prophet could not know otherwise; even had it been possible for them to kill Elisha, God could easily raise up and instruct another prophet; foolish to fight against God. Learn:—God knows all that the wicked are doing; He will employ this knowledge for the benefit of the good.*d*

The reported fame of Elisha (*v.* 12).—It is not to be doubted but that Naaman, upon his return from Samaria, spread the fame of Elisha so much in the court of Syria, that some of the great men there might have a curiosity to make a further inquiry concerning him; and being informed by several of his miraculous works, they might thence conclude that he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as perform such works as were related of him; and that therefore, in all probability, he was the person who gave the king of Israel intelligence of all the schemes that had been attempted to entrap him.*e*

13—18. (13) **Dothan,** Ge. xxxvii. 17, now Tel-Dothaim :[a] on a hill S.W. of Jenin. (14) **by night,** in hope of taking the prophet at unawares. (15) **servant,** not Gehazi. **early,** to his duties : poss. disturbed sooner than usual by the noise of the gathering host. **host,** this term refers to the foot soldiers. **alas,** *etc.*, freshly engaged in the prophetic service, he prob. knew little of his master's power. (16) **fear not,** *etc.*, Elisha saw the defence, and foresaw the issue. (17) **mountain . . Elisha,** encamped between Elisha and the Syrian host.[b] (18) **blindness,** as Ge. xix. 11.

The sufficiency of the Divine protection (*vv.* 15—17).—Consider—I. The cause of the young man's alarm. II. The prophet's calm serenity of mind. III. His tender concern for his servant. Conclusion:—(1) How liable are human creatures to be alarmed at the approach of danger; (2) How blessed are the people of God under the Divine protection, even in the greatest dangers; (3) The duty of those who are strong in faith to help and pray for their weaker brethren; (4) How blind and ignorant they must be who fight against the people of God.[c]—*Helpers of the good* (*vv.* 15—17).—Consider—I. That the good are often placed in circumstances to require external help. II. That there are helpers vouchsafed superior to the antagonists. Superior—1. In number; 2. In the instrumentalities they wield; 3. In their invincible determination; 4. In the authority under which they act. III. That the superior helpers of the good are not seen by all. This is owing to several reasons. 1. The tendency of men to judge after the senses; 2. The habit of referring everything to secondary causes; 3. Gloominess of disposition; 4. Want of sympathy with God. IV. That the seeing of these spiritual helpers only requires the opening of the eyes.[d]—*The revelation of the unseen* (*vv.* 15—17).—I. The heavy pressure of outward and visible things upon us who are still in the body. 1. The business; 2. The pleasures; 3. The trials, of life. II. How very near, all the while, lies another world and another life, altogether of spirit and heaven and God. Who is there that is not conscious of a life besides and within this of time? III. What are the truths and realities of this other life as the Word of God discloses them? IV. A man passes out of the life of sight into a life of faith by that opening of the eyes of which the text tells.[e]

Providence is inexplicable.—The events of Providence appear to us very much like the letters thrown into a post-bag, and then sent forth on its destination. The person who carries it—

> Messenger of joy
> Perhaps to thousands, and of grief to some :
> To him indifferent whether grief or joy.

Onward he moves, quite unconcerned as to the nature of the communications he bears, or the effects produced by them. And when we look into that repository it may seem as if its contents were in inextricable confusion, and we wonder how the letters, parcels, documents, money and periodicals should ever reach their individual destination. But when every letter has its special address inscribed upon it—it has the name and residence of the party, and so it shall in due time fall into his hands, and bring its proper intelligence. And what different purposes do these letters fulfil! what varied emotions do they excite! This declares

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Elisha's celestial body-guard

a Thomson, Ld. and Bk. p. 466.

Dothan means *two wells*, or *the double fountain*.

b Ex. xiv. 13; 2 Chr. xxxii. 7; Ps. lv. 18, xlvi. 7; Ro. viii. 31.

Ps. lxviii. 17, xci 11; Mat. xxvi. 53.

v. 15. *G. Patrick*, 267.

v. 16. *Bp. Heber*, 18, 42.

v. 17. *H. Blunt, Elisha.*

c J. Jaques, M.A.

"God hath a thousand handés to chastise; a thousand dartés of punición, a thousand bowés made in divers wise, a thousand arblasts bent in his dungéon."—*Warton.*

d Dr. Thomas.

e Dr. C. J. Vaughan.

"Suppose you were in a smith's shop, and there should see several sorts of tools,—some crooked, some bowed, others hooked: would you condemn all these things for nought, because they do not look handsome? The smith makes use of them all for the doing of his work. Thus it is with the providences of God: they seem to us to be very crooked and strange: yet they all carry on God's work."—*Spencer.*

"This is thy work, Almighty

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Providence, whose power, beyond the stretch of human thought, revolves the orbs of empire; bids them sink deep in the dead'ning night of Thy displeasure, or rise majestic o'er a wondering world."—*Thomson.*

"The wheels of a watch or clock move contrary one to another; some one way, some another; yet all serve the intent of the workman, to show the time, or to make the clock to strike. So in the world, the providence of God may seem to run cross to His promises—one man takes this way, another runs that way; good men go one way, wicked men another; yet all in conclusion accomplish His will, and centre in the purpose of God, the Great Creator of all things."—*Dr. Sibbs.*

f Dr. McCosh.

that friends are in health and prospering, this other is the bearer of the news of wealth, or of wealth itself, this third tells of some crushing disappointment, and quenches long cherished hopes by the tidings of the utter failure of deep-planned schemes—while the fourth, sable symbols, announces to the wife that she is a widow, or to the parent that she is childless, or to the child fondly cherished by the mother, that he is an orphan. Each has its intelligence, and conveys it to the party intended regardless of the emotions that are excited. It is a kind of picture of the movements of Providence. What a crowd of events huddled together, and apparently confused, does it carry along with it. Very divers are the objects bound up in that bundle, and very varied are the emotions which they are to excite when opened up, and yet how coolly and systematically does the vehicle proceed on its way. Neither the joy nor the sorrow which it produces causes it to linger an instant in its course. But meanwhile every occurrence or bundle of occurrences is let out at its proper place. Each has a name inscribed upon it, and each has a place to which it is addressed. Each, too, has a message to carry, and a purpose to fulfil. Some of these inspire hope or joy, and others raise fear and sorrow. The events which are unfolded by the same course of things, and which fall on the same day, bring gladness to one, and land another in deepest distress. On the occurrence of the same event you perceive one weeping and another rejoicing. Some of the dispensations are observed to propagate prosperity through a whole community. And these others so black and dismal, and of which so many arrive at the same time, carry, as they are scattered, gloom into the abodes of thousands. But amid all this seeming confusion, every separate event has its separate destination. If pestilence has only some one person devoted to it in a city or community, that person it will assuredly find out, and execute the judgment of heaven regarding him. If there be a thousand persons allotted to it in a district, it will not allow one of the thousand to escape. If among the numbers who are dying there be one regarding whom it has no commission to serve upon him, that individual must remain untouched. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." It has a commission, and it will execute it; but then it cannot go beyond its commission. And in regard to every person to whom the event comes, it has a special end to accomplish; and it bears a special message, if he will but read it and attend to it. Carrying out this principle fully, the reflecting, not to speak of the devout mind, has ever found much instruction in watching the dispensation of Divine Providence.*f*

Elisha's treatment of blind prisoners

a "Untruth has been held by all moralists to be justifiable towards a public enemy. Where we have a right to kill, much more have we a right to de-

19—23. (19) **not the way,** *etc.*, this deception must be treated as part of a stratagem, justifiable in war and defence of life.*a* (20) **Samaria,** so in the power of their enemy, and liable to be cut down by the Israelite soldiers. (21) **my father,***b* term of highest respect: called forth by Jehoram's delight in seeing the predicament of his enemies. (22) **not smite,** bcc. Elisha intended that they should produce a fear of Jehovah, and His prophet, by the report they took back. **set,** *etc.*, treat them as guests, not as prisoners. (23) **bands,***c* predatory bands.

On the treatment of enemies (*v.* 22).—I. Common method. Retaliation; paying off old scores, "eye for an eye," etc. II. Right

method. Forgive; practical forgiveness, doing good to them that hate, etc. 1. Best policy: coals of fire on head of foe will melt his heart, change him to friend; otherwise his animosity will continue; an enemy conquered by kindness is a friend won; the bands of Syria came no more; if injured they would have come in vengeance; 2. Most Christlike: He forgave His enemies; while we were enemies, Christ—what?—punished?—no; He died for us. Learn:—Are we enemies of God? let us turn to Him, He is our Friend.[c]

Clemency (*v.* 22).—Clemency is not only the privilege, the honour, and the duty of a prince, but it is also his security, and better than all his garrisons, forts, and guards to preserve himself and his dominions in safety. It is the brightest jewel in a monarch's crown. As meekness moderates anger, so clemency moderates punishment. That prince is truly royal who masters himself; looks upon all injuries as below him; and governs by equity and reason, not by passion. Clemency is profitable for all; mischiefs contemned, lose their force.[d]

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ceive by stratagem."—*S. k. Com.*

[b] "In China the mandarin is addressed 'my father and my mother.'"—*Huc.*

[c] "This did not exclude a regular open war, such as detailed in next ch."—*Keil.*

[d] *Hive.*

v. 19. *J. M. Neale, Lect.* 35.

d L. M. Stretch.

24—29. (24) **after this,** some years after. (25) **ass's head,** the most worthless part of an unclean[a] animal. The price was about five guineas.[b] **cab,** the smallest dry measure of the Heb., 18 cabs made 1 ephah. **dove's dung,** either actually the excrement of pigeons;[c] or a kind of pulse,[d] even now called by that name, wh. is parched and dried, and used upon long journeys. (26) **passed by,** on his rounds of inspection. (27) **if,** *etc.*, or *Nay, let Jehovah help thee, I cannot.*[e] (28) **what aileth thee?** perceiving hers was not mere cry for food. (29) **hid,** *etc.*,[f] Le. xxvi. 29; De. xxviii. 53.

the siege of Samaria

[a] Le. xi. 3.

[b] "In Plutarch's *Life of Artaxerxes* an instance occurs of the Persian army being reduced to such distress that they had to eat their beasts of burden; and even that kind of food became so scarce that an ass's head would be sold for 60 silver drachmæ."—*Kitto.*

[c] *Spk. Com.*

[d] *Bochart, Kitto.*

[e] *Keil.*

[f] Sam. iv. 10.

Comp. Josephus' account of the famine at taking of Jerusalem by Titus.

[g] *Lange.*

vv. 25—27. *Ir. M. Hole, On the Liturgy*, ii. 19.

[h] *Roberts.*

Homiletic hints.—Samaria during the siege.—I. The great scarcity. II. The two women. III. The king, *v.* 24. Evil men wax worse and worse (2 Tim. iii. 13), *v.* 25. General public calamities are not mere natural events, but visitations of God on account of public guilt.[g]

Dove's dung (*v.* 25).—The Talmud translation for "dove's dung," is "dove's grain:" which is known in the East by the name of *Kara-manne-piru.* Dr. Boothroyd translates it "a cab of vetches," which amounts to about the same thing. Bochart, Dr. Clarke, and many others, believe it to have been pulse. The Orientals are exceedingly fond of eating leguminous grains, when parched. I have often eaten the pulse which pigeons are so fond of, and have found it very wholesome, either in puddings or soup (Lev. xxii. 14; 2 Sam. xvii. 28), and it is surprising to see what a great distance they will travel on only that food and water. It was therefore in consequence of the famine that this, their favourite, and generally very cheap sustenance, was so dear. Of what use would "a cab of dove's dung" be unto them? Some say, in explanation, it was good for manure! What were they to live upon till the manure had produced the grain?[h]

30—33. (30) **rent,** *etc.*, in horror, not in grief, or in humiliation. **sackcloth,** the outward sign of humiliation, done to avert the danger fr. the city.[a] (31) **God . . day,** showing no sign of real *penitence.* Prob. he was vexed with Elisha bec. he had not wrought a deliverance. (32) **elders,** of the city. **son of a murderer,** worthy successor of his father Ahab. **shut,** *etc.*, *i.e.* they were to detain the executioner until the king him-

the king of Israel would behead Elisha

[a] 1 Ki. xxi. 27; Jon. iii. 6.

[b] Jehoram had sackcloth on his

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loins, but not on his heart; . . . instead of being penitent towards God, he is furious against God's prophet" — *Wordsworth.*

v. 33. *J. Fawcett*, ii. 402.

b Lange.

No honey is so sweet as that which drops from a promise. The promises are the support of faith — the springs of joy — the saint's royal charter.
c Roberts.

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Elisha predicts an end of famine

a "This may be estimated at a peck of fine flour for two shillings and sixpence, and two pecks of barley for the same price." — *Jamieson.*
b "When an Eastern king walks or stands abroad in the open air, he always supports himself on the arm of the highest courtier present."—*Jamieson.*
c "If Jehovah were to open sluices in heaven, and pour down corn as He poured down rain in the time of the Deluge, even then could there be such abundance as thou speakest of?"—*Spk. Com.*
d Dr. Talmage.
e Mr. Layard.
f Mr. Morier.

the four lepers at the gate

self arrived. (33) **and he said,** *i.e.* the king, who burst into the prophet's presence. **wait for,** obey thee in expecting Div. deliverance.

Homiletic hints.—Help in trouble.—Earthly might can help and protect us against the injustice of men, but not against the judgments of God. The crime of the two women is a proof that, when men fall away from God, they may sink down among the ravenous beasts—*vv.* 30, 31. A faithful picture of the wrong-headedness of man in misfortune. Whenever God's judgments fall upon a people, the teachers and preachers must bear the blame.[b]

Sound of the master's feet (*v.* 32).—This form of speech is used to denote the rapid approach of a person. When boys at school are making a great noise, or doing anything which they ought not, some one will say, "I hear the sound of the master's feet." Are people preparing triumphal arches, made of leaves, or cleaning the rest-house of a great man, some of them keep saying, "Quick, quick, I hear the sound of his feet." "Alas, alas! how long you have been! do we not hear even the sound of the judge's feet?"[c]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **said,** to Jehoram, as a reply to his foolish speech, ch. vi. 33. **measure,** lit. *a seah,* = six cabs; and a third part of ephah. **shekel,** this was not in Elisha's time; a coin, but a fixed quantity.[a] (2) **a lord,** Heb. *shalish,* a captain; one of the chief officers of the court. **leaned,**[b] ch. v. 18. **windows,**[c] openings so as to pour down the food out of heaven. This is the language of scornful incredulity. **see it,** comp. *vv.* 17—20.

Rationalism.—I. Describe the circumstances of the place and time. II. In the face of this note the startling prediction of the prophet. III. The scoffing courtier. There are many such who similarly reason about God. Bible, soul, eternity. IV. Such scoffs deserve no argument, no time to be wasted on such men. V. The scoffer's end.[d]

Traffic at the gate (*v.* 1).—A custom similar to this prevails in most Eastern cities. Frequently in the gates of cities, as at Mosul, these recesses are used as shops for the sale of wheat and barley, bread and grocery.[e] In our rides we usually went out of the town (Teheran, in Persia) at the gate leading to the village of Shah Abdul Azum, where a market was held every morning, particularly of mules, asses, and camels. At about sunrise the owners of the animals assemble, and exhibit them for sale. But, besides, here were sellers of all sorts of goods in temporary shops and tents; and this, perhaps, will explain the custom alluded to in 2 Kings vii. of the sale of barley and flour in the gate of Samaria.[f]

3—7. (3) **entering . . gate,** "perhaps in a separate dwelling there."[a] (4) **fall unto,** *i.e.* endeavour to join. This they could only do as beggars. (5) **twilight,** choosing this time that they might not be observed. **uttermost,** *etc.*, meaning the extreme advance of the enemy's camp towards the city. **no man,** or sentry. (6) **noise,** "deceived by a sound in the air:"[b] either an illusion of the sense of hearing (comp. illusion of sight, vi. 19, 20),

or some objective reality of sound.[c] **Hittites,** Ge. xxiii. 7; 1 Ki. x. 29. (7) **fled,** in helpless panic.

Submission to God (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. The present condition of impenitent sinners involves certain death, or the loss of their souls. The truth is evident from—1. Divine threatenings; 2. The state of sinners' hearts. II. The only wise and safe step is to surrender ourselves entirely and unreservedly into the hands of God. III. The God of all grace will effect their deliverance, and bring salvation to them.[d]

Tradition of the lepers (*v.* 3).—According to Jewish tradition these four lepers were Gehazi and his three sons, who had been smitten with the fatal disease in punishment of Gehazi's daring imposture and falsehood towards Naaman. If this tradition is trustworthy it would explain how, immediately after the relief of Samaria, according to the word of Elisha and in the miraculous manner detailed in 2 Kings vii., Gehazi should be found in Samaria and in close converse with the king of Israel, to whom he relates "the great things that Elisha hath done" (2 Kings viii. 4, 5). Otherwise it would seem strange that Joram should be holding personal intercourse with a leper, when even during the straitest siege lepers had been excluded from the city.

8–11. (8) **came again,** not at first realising the desolation of the camp. (9) **mischief,** better, *punishment will fall upon us.* (10) **porter,**[a] or night watchmen; comp. *v.* 11. (11) **they,** *i.e.* the porters.

Christian privilege and duty (*v.* 9).—This passage sets before us—I. The blessedness of Gospel times: "a day of good tidings." Consider—1. The goodness of these tidings; 2. Their newness. II. The evil of selfishly enjoying these Gospel times: "we do not well." 1. We show a want of common benevolence if we simply receive the Gospel and make no effort to diffuse it, 2. There is a want of loving obedience in this; 3. We thus rob ourselves of the highest enjoyment of the Gospel.[b]

The flight of the Syrians (*v.* 10).—From the circumstances recorded concerning the flight of the Syrians, it appears to have been remarkably precipitate. That they were not altogether unprepared for a hasty departure may be inferred from comparing this passage with the following extract from *Memoirs Relative to Egypt*, p. 300:—"As soon as the Arabs are apprehensive of an attack they separate into several small camps, at a great distance from each other, and tie their camels to the tents, so as to be able to move off at a minute's notice." Such a precaution is not probably peculiar to the modern Arabs, but might be adopted by the Syrian army. If this was the case it shows with what great fear God filled their minds, that though prepared as usual for a quick march, they were not able to avail themselves of the advantage, but were constrained to leave everything behind them as a prey to their enemies.[c]

12–16. (12) **servants,** attendants, court officers. **to hide themselves,** in ambush, so enticing Israel outside the city walls.[a] (13) **five,** comp. *two* in *v.* 14. **as all,** *etc.*, "they will fare neither better nor worse than we shall."[b] (14) **two,** *etc.*, lit. *two horse chariots*, i.e. chariots with their complement of horses.[c] (15) **to Jordan,** wh. the Syr. would cross at Jisr Mejamia, 35 m. N.E. of Samaria. **haste,** or fright. (16) **went out,** feeling quite secure.

B.C. *cir.* 892.

a Wordsworth.
b Ewald.
c Keil.
"In my walks about Zion today, I was taken to see the village or quarter assigned to the lepers, lying along the wall directly E. of Zion gate. I was unprepared for the visit, and made positively sick by the loathsome spectacle." —*Thompson.*
d Dr. A. Hyde.
Comp. for Mosaic law concerning lepers and the camp., Le. xiii. 46; Nu. v. 3. Comp. Ju. vii. 22; 1 Sa. xiv. 20; 2 Ki. xix. 7.

the lepers report the abandoned camp

a "The word has a collective form, like our word *guard*." — *Spk. Com.*

b F. Tucker, B.A.
"You may say, 'I wish to send this ball so as to kill the lion crouching yonder, ready to spring upon me. My wishes are all right; and I hope Providence will direct the ball.' Providence won't. You must do it; and, if you do not, you are a dead man." — *Beecher.*

c Burder.

Elisha's prediction fulfilled

a Comp. Jos. viii. 3–19.
A very simple stratagem, wh. could not suc-

B.C. *cir.* 892.

ceed if strict military discipline were preserved.

b Wordsworth.

"A prolix way of saying that the horsemen will incur no greater danger by going to reconnoitre than the rest of their countrymen by remaining in the city, since all are perishing."—*Keil.*

c "The chariots may have been sent to enable the scouts to bring back samples of the spoil."—*Wordsworth.*

d Paxton.

the death of the scornful noble

v. 18. *II. Hunt, Elisha.*

v. 20. "His corpse became a bloody seal upon the word of Jehovah, and of the prophet."—*Krummacher.*

"In the last days, also, when the abundance of the Divine grace shall be poured out, like a stream, in the midst of the greatest misery, many despisers of the glorious promises of God will see the beginning thereof, but will not attain to the enjoyment of it; they will be thrust aside by marvellous judgments."—*Berleb. Bibel.*

a W. Dransfield.

b Denham and Clapperton's Trav. in Africa.

The return of cheapness and plenty (*v.* 16).—I. It was as predicted *v.* 1. II. It was in spite of all scoffing to the contrary. III. It was procured from a strange source: the quarter of danger becomes the fountain of supply.

The suspected stratagem (*v.* 12).—In the history of the revolt of Ali Bey we have an account of a transaction very similar to the stratagem supposed to have been practised by the Syrians. The Pacha of Damascus having approached the Sea of Tiberias, found Sheik Daher encamped there; but the sheik, deferring the engagement till the next morning, during the night divided his army into three parts, and left the camp with great fires blazing, all sorts of provisions, and a large quantity of spirituous liquors, giving strict orders not to hinder the enemy from taking possession of the camp, but to come down and attack just before the dawn of day. In the middle of the night the pacha thought to surprise Sheik Daher, and marched in silence to the camp, which, to his great astonishment, he found entirely abandoned, and imagined the sheik had fled with so much precipitation that he could not carry off the baggage and stores. The pacha thought proper to stop in the camp and refresh his soldiers. They soon fell to plunder, and drank so freely of the liquors that, overcome with the fatigue of the day's march and the fumes of the spirits, they were not long ere they sunk into a profound sleep. At that time two sheiks, who were watching the enemy, came silently to the camp, and Daher having repassed the Sea of Tiberias, meeting them, they all rushed into the camp, and fell upon the sleeping foe, eight thousand of whom they butchered on the spot; and the pacha, with the remainder of the troops, escaped with much difficulty to Damascus, leaving all their baggage in the hands of the victorious Daher.[d]

17—20. (17) **the lord,** *v.* 2. **trode upon him,** so great was the crush of those going out of the gate for spoil, and of others bringing back food for their famishing families. (18) **man . . king,** *v.* 1. (19) **answered,** *v.* 2. (20) **fell out,** came to pass. What seemed a strange prophecy found a very natural fulfilment.

Unbelief (*vv.* 19, 20).—Unbelief—I. Leaves us in a state of aggravated condemnation. II. Prevents us from having any share in the blessings of salvation. III. Ties up the hands of the Saviour, so that He can do nothing for us while we continue in this state. IV. Excludes from the kingdom of God. V. Exposes to eternal death, and shuts up the soul that dies under its power in the prison of hell. Improvement:—1. Let us learn to trust God even when we cannot trace Him; 2. Let us pray for the increase of our faith.[a]

The market in the gate (*v.* 18, see also on *v.* 1).—We had a market in front of one of the principal gates of the town. Slaves, sheep, and bullocks, the latter in great numbers, were the principal live stock for sale. There were at least fifteen thousand persons gathered together, some of them coming from places two or three days distant. Wheat, rice, and gussub were abundant; tamarinds in the pod, ground nuts, ban beans, ochre, and indigo. . . . Leather was in great quantities; and the skins of the large snake, and pieces of the skin of the crocodile, used as an ornament for the scabbard of their daggers, were also brought to me for sale.[b]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

B.C. *cir.* 891.

1—6. (1) **spake Elisha,** or Elis. had spoken. The time referred to is not indicated. **son,** *etc.*, ch. iv. 35. **canst sojourn,** findest thou canst get shelter and food. **called for,** or brought about,[a] (2) **land of Phil.,** situate on S. seacoast of Palestine, rich with corn-growing plains. (3) **to cry,** *etc.*, for restoration of her land, wh. had been seized in her absence.[b] (4) **Gehazi,** 2 Ki. iv. 27. (5) **cried,** the cry actually interrupting Gehazi. (6) **officer,** *eunuch.*[c]

Philistia (*v.* 2).—The most striking and characteristic feature of Philistia is its immense plain of corn fields, stretching from the edge of the sandy tract right up to the very walls of the hills of Judah, which look down its whole length from north to south. These rich fields must have been the great source at once of the power and value of Philistia, the cause of its frequent aggressions on Israel, and of the unceasing efforts of Israel to master the territory. It was in fact a "little Egypt." As in earlier ages the tribes of Palestine, when pressed by famine, went down to the valley of the Nile, so in later ages, when there was a famine in the hills of Samaria and the plain of Esdraelon, the Shunammite went with her household "and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years." In that plain of corn and those walls of rock lies the junction of Philistine and Israelite history, which is the peculiarity of the tribe of Dan. This region is what the kings of Sidon regarded as "the rock of Dan." These are the fields of "standing corn," with "vineyards and olives" amongst them, into which the Danite hero sent down "three hundred jackals" (Judges xv. 4).[d]

7—11. (7) **came,** according to the command of 1 Ki. xix. 15. (8) **Hazael,**[a] *whom God beholds,* or *cares for.* **a present,** this it is not said Elisha accepted.[b] (9) **forty camels' burden,** not that each was burdened to its full capacity.[c] **thy son,** the expression of reverence for Elisha, comp. ch. vi. 21. (10) **mayest,** *etc.*, that would be a courtier-like message, but it is not the Lord's.[d] (11) **stedfastly,** on Hazael, as if reading his guilty purpose. **he was ashamed,** *i.e.* Hazael.

The death-bed of Benhadad (*vv.* 7, 8).—Let us notice—I. The death-bed of Benhadad. II. The exceeding deceitfulness of the heart, and the nature of temptation, as illustrated in Hazael. Learn—1. That false accounts and groundless expectations are among the principal agents of hell; 2. That when once a corrupt heart is fully set and instigated to do evil, it is capable of any wickedness.[e]

A royal present (*v.* 9).—The Syrian prince on this occasion, in which he felt a particular interest, no doubt sent Elisha a present corresponding with his rank and magnificence; but it can scarcely be supposed that so many camels were required to carry it, or that the king would send, as a Jewish writer supposes he did, so great a quantity of provisions to one man. The meaning of this passage certainly is, that the various articles of which the present consisted, according to the modern custom of Oriental courts, were carried on a number of camels for the sake of state, and that not fewer than forty were employed in the cavalcade. That these camels were not fully laden must be evident from this, that

the king, Gehazi, and the Shunammite

a Comp. Eze. xxxvi. 29; Ro iv. 17; also Ps. cv. 16; Hag. i. 11.

b "It is still common for even petty sheiks to confiscate the property of any person who is exiled for a time, or who moves away temporarily fr. his district. Esp. is this true of widows and orphans, and small is the chance of such having their property restored, unless they can secure the mediation of some one more influential than themselves." —*Thomson.*

c 2 Ki. ix. 32; 1 Chr. xxviii. 1; Is. lvi. 3, 4.

d Dr. Stanley.

Elisha weeps at the sight of Hazael

a "The most trusty of all Benhadad's attendants."—*Josephus.*

b 2 Ki. v. 15, 16, 26.

c "The Orientals are fond of display, and would, ostentatiously, lay upon forty beasts what might very easily have been borne by four." —*Keil, Jamieson, etc.*

d "There is prob. in this sentence a confusion between the Heb. words for *not,* and *to him,* wh. are nearly alike

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Here trans. *Thou mayest not recover.*
e R. Cecil, M.A.
f Paxton.

Hazael murders the king
a 2 Ki. x. 32, xii. 17. xiii 3.
b So reads *Sept., Vulg, Syr.*, and *Arabic.* Comp. for term *dog.* 1 Sa. xvii. 43. xxiv. 14; 2 Sa. iii. 8, ix. 8, xvi. 9. Comp. for general idea of passage, Je. xvii. 9; Mat. xxvi. 33, 34.
c Kitto.
d "Some article usually found in a sick room."—*Spk Com.*
e Ewald.
"Some think Benhadad used this means to check his fever, and succumbed to the improper remedy."—*Geddes, Boothroyd, Kitto*, etc.
"The usual idea is that Hazael murdered him." *Wordsworth, Porter, Spk Com.*
f Dr A. Van Zandt.
g Dr. Kollock.
h W. Jay.
"It has been truly said that the human heart is like the millstone, which, if there be wheat beneath it, will grind to purposes of health; if not, will grind still, at the will of the wild wind, but on itself. So does the heart wear out itself, against its own thought. One fixed idea—one remembrance, and no other—one stationary, wearing anguish. This is remorse, passing into de-

the common load of a Turkman's camel is eight hundred pounds' weight, and consequently thirty-two thousand pounds' weight is the proper loading of forty camels; "if they were only of the Arab breed twenty thousand pounds' weight was their proper loading;" a present, as Mr. Harmer justly remarks, too enormous to be sent by any one person to another.*f*

12—15. (12) **evil,** *etc.*,*a* the things mentioned in this *v.* were the usual accompaniments of battle and siege in those older days: not peculiar to Hazael. (13) **what . . thing,** idea exactly is, *What is thy servant* (who am) *only a dog, that he should do such great acts as these?*b "How could a person of such low condition have such high influence upon the fate of nations?"c (14) **recover,** comp. *v.* 10. (15) **thick cloth,**d coverlet, bath-cloth.e

The unknown depths of depravity (*v.* 13).—I. Hazael knew that he was a wicked man, and that his tendencies were wicked. II. Though consciously guilty he did not know how wicked he was, and to what lengths of crime the evil tendencies would carry him. III. Though honest in his recoil from the predicted atrocities, yet, as the event proved, he was capable of doing all, and more than all, that the prophet had said.*f*—*Hazael* (*v.* 13).—I. Self-confidence is a false and worthless ground of security. II. The abhorrence of crime is no infallible protection. III. Mental and social elevation afford no immunity from sin. IV. The absence of present evil. Improvement:—1. We are not in a condition to find safety in ourselves; 2. There is great cause for thankfulness in the remembrance of past instances of preservation; 3. We constantly need Divine guidance and grace; 4. Our strength is to know our weakness, and trust in the resources of Almighty power and love.*g*

Deceitfulness of the heart (*v.* 13).—The reference to the accounts given of the infamous Robespierre in connection with the horrible atrocities committed during the French Revolution serve as an illustration of the sentiment of the text. This man originally seemed an amiable man; so he was deemed in all his neighbourhood. He published two books—one on electricity, the other on the code of criminal jurisprudence, lamenting that it was so sanguinary, and endeavoured to ameliorate it. But the current of the Revolution laid hold on him, and the flood hurried him away, and he became the reverse of all he appeared before.*h*

The deeds of the heart.—

The goodness of the heart is shown in deeds
Of peacefulness and kindness. Hand and heart
Are one thing with the good, as thou shouldst be.
The splendour of corruption hath no power
Nor vital essence; and content in sin
Shows apathy, not satisfied control.
Do my words trouble thee? Then treasure them.
Pain overgot gives peace, as death does heaven;
All things that speak of heaven speak of peace.
Peace hath more might than war. High brows are calm.
Great thoughts are as still as stars; and truths, like suns,
Stir not; though many systems tend round them
Mind's step is still as Death, and all great things
Which cannot be controlled, whose end is good.
Behold yon throne! there, Love, Faith, Hope are one.
There judgment, righteousness and mercy make

One and the same thing. God's salvation is
His vengeance, His wrath glory ; as on earth
Destruction restoration to the pure.
Humanity is perfected in heaven.[i]

16—19. (16) **began,** *etc.*, ch. iii. 1. His father resigned the throne to him two years before his death. This statement does not accord with ch. i. 17. Jehosh. may have given his son the royal title in his sixteenth year, and given him the actual rule seven years later. (17) **eight,** six only after his father's death. (18) **way,** *etc.*, *i.e.* he introduced Baal worship. **evil,** *see* 2 Chr. xxi. 4. (19) **a light,**[a] candles, lamp, or one to rule.

Abuse of mercy (*vv.* 18, 19).—A certain member of that Parliament wherein a statute for the relief of the poor was passed was an ardent promoter of that Act. He asked his steward when he returned to the country what the people said of that statute. The steward answered that he heard a labouring man say that whereas formerly he worked six days in the week, now he would work but four, which abuse of that good provision so affected the pious statesman that he could not refrain from weeping. Lord, thou hast made many provisions in Thy Word for my support and comfort, and hast promised in my necessities Thy supply and protection ; but let not my presumption of help from Thee cause my neglect of any of those means for my spiritual and temporal preservation which Thou hast enjoined.[b]

20—24. (20) **Edom,** Ge. xxv. 29—34.[a] (21) **Zair,** either *Zoar*[b] or *Seir*[c] is intended, prob. the latter. (22) **Libnah,** Jos. xv. 42. (23) **written,** 2 Chr. xxi. (24) **Ahaziah,** called *Jehoahaz*, 2 Chr. xxi. 17, xxii. 1—6.

Mercy seen in our lives.—What a rugged, precipitous, ungainly pass is that Col d'Obbia ! It was shrewd common sense and true humanity which suggested the erection of that poor little hospice at the summit. Never was a shelter more opportune, a refuge more welcome. One could not have expected to find a retreat in so desolate a region, but there it was, and we were received into it with cordiality. The great Lord of pilgrims has taken care that in the hardest parts of our road to the Celestial City there should be blessed resting-places, where, beneath the shade of promises, weary ones may repose within the shelter of love. God's hospice may be confidently looked for whenever the way is more than ordinarily difficult.[d]

25—29. (25, 26) **two and twenty,** comp. 2 Chr. xxii. 2. **daughter,** grand-daughter. (27) **in the way,** comp. *v.* 18. **son in law,** so connected with the house of Ahab by a double tie of mother and wife.[a] (28) **Ramoth-gilead,** 1 Ki. xxii. 3—36. (29) **Jezreel,** Jos. xix. 18. **Ramah,** same as Ramoth of *v.* 28.

Deceitfulness of sickness.—In King Edward's days, as long as the heat of the plague lasted, there was crying out, "Peccavi, mercy ; good Lord, mercy, mercy !" Then lords and ladies, and people of the best sort, cried out to the ministers, "For God's sake tell us what we shall do to avoid the wrath of God. Take these bags ; pay so much to such a one whom I deceived ; so much to restore unto another, whom, in bargaining, I overreached ; give so much to the poor, so much to pious uses, etc." But after the sickness was over, they were just the same men as they were before.[b]

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spair ; itself the goad to fresh and wilder crimes."—*F. W. Robertson.*

i Bailey.

the reign of Jehoram

a 1 Ki. xi. 36, xv. 4 ; 2 Chr. xxi. 7.

"The sun is the eye of the world ; and he is indifferent to the negro or the cold Russian ; to them that dwell under the line, and them that stand near the tropics—the scalded Indian, or the poor boy that shakes at the foot of the Riphean hills ; so is the mercy of God."—*Bp. Taylor.*

b Spurgeon.

revolt of Edom, and death of Joram

a Comp. for orig. inhab. of this country, etc., Ge. xiv. 6, xxxvi. 20 ; De. ii. 4, 8, 12. For the later history, 2 Sa. viii. 14 ; 1 Ki. xi. 14, 16 ; 2 Ki. iii. 8—26.

b Morers, Ewald.

c Spk. Com.

d Spurgeon.

reign of Ahaziah

a Wordsworth.

"Little doth a man think what plague he may bring on his posterity by joining himself with an ill house or stock."—*Bp. Sanderson.*

Our very misery gives God an occasion to bestow upon us His mercy.

b Bp. Reynolds.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

B.C. 884.

Elisha sends to anoint Jehu

a 1 Sa. x. 1.

vv. 1—3. *W. Reading*, iv. 57; *F. D. Maurice*, 139.

"Sweet pillows, sweetest bed; a chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light; a rosy garland, and a weary head."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

1—4. (1) **children,** or *sons*, 1 Ki. xx. 35. **gird,** *etc.*, *i.e.* make thyself ready to undertake a journey. **box,** vial, or horn.[a] **oil,** the anointing oil. (2) **Jehu,** who was left in charge there when the wounded king retired, ch. viii. 29. **carry him,** induce him to retire into a private chamber with thee. (3) **say,** comp. *vv.* 6—10. **flee,** so as not to be questioned. (4) **went,** as bidden.

Alabaster boxes (*v.* 1).—Theophrastus and Pliny speak of very precious unguents as kept in vessels of alabaster, for their better preservation; but sometimes the vessels or boxes employed for this use were of gold, silver, glass, stone, or even wood. The vessels were of small size, and appear to have borne a form similar to that of our oil flasks, with long and narrow necks. They were sometimes much ornamented. The Romans were in the habit of using small boxes of a square or oblong shape, called *acerræ*, of rich design and great value.—*Eastern bedchambers* (*v.* 2).—A bedchamber does not, according to the usage of the East, mean a sleeping-room, but a repository for beds. Chardin says, "In the East, in the evening, they spread out a mattress or two of cotton, very light, of which people have several in great houses, against they should have occasion, and a room on purpose for them." From hence it appears that it was in a chamber of beds, *i.e.* a storeroom in which the beds were kept, that Joash was concealed.

Jehu anointed, doom of house of Ahab foretold

a 1 Ki. xxi 15. *b* 1 Ki. xxi. 23; 2 Ki. ix. 36, 37.

"The Abbé Poiret in his travels through Barbary, tells us that the severest punishment among the Arabs is to be cut to pieces and thrown to the dogs. 'After this the Queen of Mira, concerning whom so many surprising stories had been told of her poisoning the water by drugs and enchantments, was, notwithstanding the known partiality of this king for the fair sex, ordered to be hewn in pieces by the soldiers, and her body given to the dogs.'"—*Bruce.*

[c] *Dr. Kitto.*

5—10. (5) **captains,** chief officers, they may have been in Jehu's tent, or in the open space outside it. (6) **into the house,** so as to receive the private message. (7) **blood,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xviii. 4. **all the servants,** this indicates a general persecution in Ahab's reign, not one confined to the prophets.[a] (8) **shut up,** 1 Ki. xiv. 10. (9) **Jeroboam,** 1 Ki. xv. 29, 30. **Baasha,** 1 Ki. xvi. 11. (10) **dogs,** *etc.*, the weight of the curse is to rest on her.[b]

Death of Jezebel (*v.* 10).—In illustration of the shocking end of Jezebel, it may be remarked that more than half the wild street dogs of the East, living upon their own resources, and without owners, soon make a rapid clearance of the flesh of dead bodies left exposed, whether of human creatures or beasts. Among other instances, it is recorded that a number of Indian pilgrims were drowned by the sinking of a ferry-boat, in which they were crossing a river. Two days after, a spectator relates:—"On my approaching several of these sad vestiges of mortality, I perceived that the flesh had been completely devoured from the bones by the pariah dogs, vultures, and other obscene animals. The only portions of the several corpses I noticed that remained entire and untouched were the bottoms of the feet and insides of the hands; and this extraordinary circumstance immediately brought to my mind the remarkable passage recorded in the Second Book of Kings, relating to the death and ultimate fate of Jezebel, who was, as to her body, eaten of dogs, and nothing remained of her but the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet. The former narration may afford a corroborative proof of the rooted antipathy the dog has to prey upon the human hands and feet. Why such should be the case remains a mystery."[c]

11—16. (11) **servants**, the captains of *v.* 5. **all well?** is it peace? **mad**,[a] or excited person. **ye know**, they all saw he was a prophet, and Jehu thought would guess his errand. (12) **thus**, as *vv.* 6—10. (13) **garment**,[b] outer robe, wh. would make sort of carpet. **stairs**, belonging to the house in wh. the captains were assembled, a flight communicating from the courtyard. (14) **had kept**, or was keeping watch over. (15) **be your minds**, or if you agree with me. (16) **come down**, ch. viii. 29.

The reproach of true religion (*v.* 11).—Let us speak concerning—I. The reproach. God's messengers have seldom been recognised as such at first. Noah, Lot (Ge. xix. 14), Moses, David (1 Sa. xvii. 28. 42). II. The vindication, "Wisdom is justified of all her children." The flood of waters justified Noah; the fire from heaven justified Lot; the Exodus justified Moses; and the victory over the Philistines justified David.[c]

Laying down garments (*v.* 13).—They laid down their garments instead of carpets. "The use of carpets was common in the East in the remoter ages. The kings of Persia always walked upon carpets in their palaces. Xenophon reproaches the degenerate Persians of his time, that they placed their couches upon carpets, to repose more at their ease. The spreading of garments in the street before persons to whom it was intended to show particular honour was an ancient and very general custom. Thus the people spread their clothes in the way before our Saviour (Matthew xxi. 8), where some also strewed branches. In the Agamemnon of Æschylus, the hypocritical Clytemnestra commands the maids to spread out carpets before her returning husband, that, on descending from his chariot, he may place his foot on a "purple-covered path." We also find this custom among the Romans. When Cato of Utica left the Macedonian army, where he had become legionary tribune, the soldiers spread their clothes in the way (Plutarch's *Life of Cato*). The hanging out of carpets, and strewing of flowers and branches, in solemn processions, among us, is a remnant of the ancient custom.[d]

17—20. (17) **the tower**,[a] a post of observation, 2 Sa. xviii. 24. Comp. *keep* of an ancient castle. (18) **hast thou**, *i.e.* my mission is no concern of time. (19) **second**, indicating the king's increased anxiety. (20) **driving**, *etc.*, not charioteering, but leading or conducting a company. The watchman noticed signs of eager haste. **furiously**, *lit.* madly.[b]

An ancient question for modern cars (*v.* 18).—There are several considerations which should urge all professors to holy activity, viz.—I. Their profession. They are by profession soldiers. As soldiers they are—1. Accoutred; 2. Disciplined. II. Their duty. The captain calls to arms. III. Their danger. The enemies are at the gate. They are in earnest too. IV. Their future: victory is sure. The great Captain has fought and vanquished foes like these before. He Himself leads the assault. He promises eternal honour and rest to "him that overcometh."[c]

Kinds of peace (*v.* 17).—There are several things called peace which are by no means Divine or God-like peace. There is peace, for example, in the man who lives for and enjoys self, with no noble aspiration goading him on to make him feel the rest of God; that is peace, but that is merely the peace of toil. There is rest upon the surface of the caverned lake, which no wind can stir: but that is the peace of stagnation. There is peace amongst

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Jehu proclaimed king

a Fr. Heb. *shâga*, to be in a state of frenzy, or fanaticism.

b Mat. xxi. 8.

"Seated on these steps Jehu would be visible to the soldiery and people."—*Wordsworth.*

c Homilist.

"The expression trans. on the top of the stairs is one of which we have lost the clue. The word is *gerem*, *i.e.* a bone; and the meaning appears to be that they placed Jehu on the very stairs themselves, without any seat or chair below him."—*Stanley.*

v. 13. *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

d Rosenmüller.

the driving of Jehu

a "There was usually in ancient times a watch tower over the royal residence, where a man was always stationed, night and day, to keep a good look out in all directions, but esp. in that direction from which any sort of tidings might be expected."—*Kitto.*

b "When Jehu and his retinue reached a point between Gilboa and Bethshan, they would be fully descried by the watchman on the tower."—*Jamieson.*

c R. A. Griffin.

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"Jehu could be seen for about six miles, as he drove up the valley of Jezreel."—*Thomson.*

b Chaldee and Arabic, with Josephus, say, "He driveth quietly."

v. 18. *A. Roberts*, ii. 159.

d F. W. Robertson.

Jehu slays Jehoram

a Heb. *chelek.* 1 Ki. xxi. 1—4.

b Kitto.

c Nu. xxiv. 1, xxv. 1, xxxi. 16; Nah. iii. 3; Re. ii. 14.

1 Ki. xxi. 25; Is. xlviii. 22, lix. 8; Je. xvi. 5; Re. iii. 17.

d 1 Ki. xxii. 34.

e Keil, Kimchi, Bochart.

f Spk. Com. The Assyrian sculptures make it prob. that Josephus was right in this interpretation. The Assyrian monarchs, when they go out to war, are frequently attended by two guards, who stand behind them in the same chariot.

g Percy Anec.

Jehu slays Ahaziah

a "His chariot bore him off, far westward of Jezreel, to Megiddo, below Mount Carmel."—*Kitto.*

b Roberts.

Jehu orders the death of Jezebel

a "In performing this operation the eye is closed, and a

the stones which have fallen and rolled down the mountain's side, and lie there quietly at rest; but that is the peace of inanity. There is peace in the hearts of enemies who lie together, side by side, in the same trench of the battlefield, the animosities of their souls silenced at length, and their hand no longer clenched in deadly enmity against each other; but that is the peace of death. If our peace be but the peace of the sensualist satisfying pleasure, if it be but the peace of mental torpor and inaction, the peace of apathy, or the peace of the soul dead in trespasses and sins, we may whisper to our souls, "Peace, peace," but there will be no peace; there is not the peace of unity, nor the peace of God, for the peace of God is the living peace of love.*d*

21—26. (21) **make ready,** lit. *bind;* put horses to the chariot. **against,** not with antagonistic intentions, but simply *to meet.* **portion,** or *lot.*[a] (22) **is it peace?** prob. the mind of the king was occupied only with the Syrian war, of wh. he supposed Jehu brought tidings.[b] (22) **whoredoms,**[c] *etc.*, by this Jehu reveals his treachery, and points out the chief object of his attack. (23) **turned his hands,**[d] ordered the chariot to be turned round, and driven back. (24) **between his arms,** in the back. **sunk,** *bowed himself.* (25) **rode,** *etc.*, either rode in a chariot after Ahab's chariot;[e] or rode side by side behind Ahab in his chariot.[f] (26) **surely,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xxi. 19. **sons,** this first mentioned here.

An expert archer (*v.* 24).—It is related by Zosimus, in his account of the battle between Constantius and Magnentius at Mursa, that a soldier, whose name was Menelaus, possessed the art of shooting three arrows from his bow at one discharge, and with them could strike three different persons. By this skilful expedient, says the historian, he killed a great number of those who opposed him; and the enemy, it might also be said, were defeated by a single archer. Unfortunately, however, this valuable man at last fell by the hands of Romulus, a general of the army of Magnentius, whom he had first wounded by an arrow.*g*

27—29. (27) **saw,** the fall of Joram. **garden house,**[a] Heb. *beth-hag-gan,* the same as *Engannim,* or *Jenin:* due S. of Jezreel. **Gur,** the ascent of the Samaritan hills. **Ibleam,** Jos. xvii. 11. **Megiddo,** 1 Ki. iv. 12. (28) **buried him,** comp. 2 Chr. xxii. 9. (29) **eleventh,** comp. ch. viii. 25.

Carried in a chariot (*v.* 28).—What does this funeral chariot, which was carried by men, mean? What we may see in the vicinity of a large town every day of our lives. This chariot, or *thandeki* (as it is called in Tamul), is about six feet long, three feet broad, and in the centre about four feet in height. The shape is various, and the following is more common than any other. The drapery is of white or scarlet cloth, and the whole is covered with garlands of flowers. The servants then carry it on their shoulders to the place of sepulture, or burning.[b]

30—33. (30) **painted her face,** lit. *placed her eyes in paint.*[a] Tinged the eyelids and lashes with a dye prepared fr. stibium and antimony. **tired her head,** dressing herself well so as to show herself a queen to the very last. (31) **Zimri,** 1 Ki. xvi. 9—15. Some trans. "Hail to the new Zimri," *etc.* (32) **eunuchs,** or officers of the chamber. (33) **down,** fr. the

window or kiosk over the palace-gate. **he trode,** or they trode. But doubtless Jehu drove right over her.

Painting the face (*v.* 30).—In the evening we accompanied them on shore, and took some coffee in the house of the consul, where we were introduced to the ladies of his family. We were amused by seeing his wife, a very beautiful woman, sitting cross-legged by us upon the divan of his apartment, and smoking tobacco with a pipe six feet in length; her eyelashes, as well as those of all the other women, were tinged with a black powder made of the sulphuret of antimony, and having by no means a cleanly appearance, although considered as essential an addition to the decorations of a woman of rank in Syria, as her ear-rings, or the golden cinctures of her ankles. Dark streaks were also pencilled, from the corners of her eyes, along the temples. This curious practice instantly brought to our recollections certain passages of Scripture, wherein mention is made of a custom among Oriental women of "putting the eyes in painting;" and which our English translators of the Bible, unable to reconcile with their notions of a female toilet, have rendered "painting the face."[b]

True and false beauty.—Hearing a young lady highly praised for her beauty, Gotthold asked: What kind of beauty do you mean? Merely that of the body, or that also of the mind? I see well that you have been looking no further than the sign which nature displays outside the house, but have never asked for the host who dwells within. Beauty is an excellent gift of God, nor has the pen of the Holy Spirit forgotten to speak its praise: but it is virtuous and godly beauty alone which Scripture honours, expressly declaring, on the other hand, that a fair woman which is without discretion, is a jewel of gold to a swine's snout (Prov. xi. 22). Many a pretty girl is like the flower called the imperial crown, which is admired, no doubt, for its showy appearance, but despised for its unpleasant odour. Were her mind as free from pride, selfishness, luxury, and levity, as her countenance from spots and wrinkles, and could she govern her inward inclinations as she does her external carriage, she would have none to match her. But who loves the caterpillar, and such insects, however showy their appearance, and bright and variegated the colours that adorn them, seeing they injure and defile the trees and plants on which they settle? What the better is an apple for its rosy skin, if the maggot have penetrated its heart? What care I for the beautiful brown of the nut, if it be worm-eaten, and fill the mouth with corruption? Even so, external beauty of person deserves no praise, unless matched with the inward beauty of virtue and holiness. It is therefore *far better to acquire beauty than to be born with it.* The best kind is that which does not wither at the touch of fever, like a flower, but lasts and endures on a bed of sickness, in old age, and even at death. My God! my beauty exists only in the sunshine of of Thy grace. Without light nothing is beautiful, and unless irradiated by Thy goodness, every object is ugly and hideous. Lord Jesus! Thou fairest of the sons of men, shed on my poor soul the beams of Thy love; that is all the beauty I desire.[c]

34—37 (34) **eat and drink,** this is told to show the cool way in wh. these dreadful deeds were done. **cursed woman,** 1 Ki. xxi. 23. **king's daughter,** 1 Ki. xvi. 31. (35) **palms,**

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small ebony rod, smeared with the composition, is squeezed between the lids, so as to tinge their edges with colour. This is considered to add greatly to the brilliancy and power of the eye, and to deepen the effect of the long black eyelashes of which the Easterns are excusably proud." — *Kitto.*

Je. iv. 30; Eze. xxiii. 40.

v. 31. *Bp.* **G.** *Williams,* 41.

b Clarke.

"Every spirit, as it is most pure, and hath in it the more of heavenly light, so it the fairer body doth procure to habit in; . . . . for of the soul the body form doth take; for soul is form, and doth the body make." — *Spenser.*

"Beauty, like ice, our footing does betray; who can tread sure on the smooth slippery way? Pleased with the passage, we glide swiftly on, and see the dangers which we cannot shun."—*Dryden.*

"Beauty is like an almanack: if it last a year it is well." — *T. Adams.*

c Scriver.

death and burial of Jezebel

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etc., the *harder* parts of the human frame.[a] The half-wild dogs make a rapid clearance of the flesh of dead bodies left exposed. (36) the word, 1 Ki. xxi. 23. (37) this is Jezebel, and so give her burial honours.

A king's daughter (*v.* 34).—Who was this king's daughter? Jezebel. One of the most infamous of women. Because a king's daughter, she should have tried to be one of the very best. Why? Influence of example. So we say of rich or well educated people who do wrong, that they are less to be excused than others. But we shall now speak of quite another kind of king's daughter. A good Christian girl is a true princess in the best sense, for she is the daughter of a King. I. Then consider her duties. 1. Her words should be true, etc.: the word of a king is his bond; 2. Her manner should be courteous: you expect princesses to be polite; 3. Her conduct should be circumspect: princesses often set the fashions; 4. Her spirit should be humble: she is daughter of a King by adoption. His love, not her merits, the reason of that relation. II. Consider her situation. 1. Her home, a palace: the house of God; 2. Her attendants, teachers, etc., all trying to help her to adorn her station; 3. Her companions: the daughter of such a King will not associate with the vile and worthless, nor with rebels against her Father; but with the rest of the King's household (Ps. xlv. 9). III. Consider her privileges. 1. She wears a robe, *i.e.* of Christ's righteousness; 2. She expects to inherit title, honour, and wealth; 3. She has many instructors in all the high arts of the Christian life: learns the language of heaven: learns to sing the new song; 4. She is the bride of a King's son.[b]

Jezreel (*v.* 36).—After half an hour more we began to ascend a low spur of Mount Gilboa, or rather a projecting knob of rising ground, covered with a few flat-topped huts, and with fresh verdure in pleasant contrast to the fallow plain below, but not relieved by a tree or shrub. This was Zerim, the ancient Jezreel. A lovely position for a capital city, but not a vestige of it remains. The very ruins have crumbled from the desolate heaps to flat turf-clad hillocks. On the crest a number of Arab boys were playing at hokey, near a marble sarcophagus, now converted into a horse-trough. One other perfect and several broken sarcophagi were strewn about, sculptured with the figure of the crescent moon, the symbol of Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Zidonians; but these were the only relics of the ancient beauty, no greater helps to the identification of Jezreel than "the skull, and the feet, and the palms of the hands" of the accursed queen were the signs by which men were able to say, "This is Jezreel." On that rocky slope must have been Naboth's vineyard, but not a shrub now clothes the bare hill-side; here must have been the watch-tower, where for miles we could trace the route from the Jordan, by which, after dashing up round the knoll of Beth-shean, Jehu urged on his horses over that smooth plain, as he drove from Ramoth-gilead. Down that other side of the hill, and across the plain to En-gannim, "the garden house" (2 Kings ix. 27), now Jenin, he pursued the flying Ahaziah. With all these points, so clear and unmistakable, no destruction has been more complete and utter, even in this land of ruins, than that of Jezreel.[c]

[a] *Stanley.*

"The body had been left on the 'mounds,' as they are called in E. stories, where the offal is thrown outside the city gates.'—*Stanley.*

"In an account of the drowning of a number of Indian pilgrims, a spectator says, "The only portions of the several corpses I noticed that remained entire and untouched, were the bottoms of the feet and the insides of the hands.' ... The dog has a rooted antipathy to the human hands and feet."—*Kitto.*

[b] *Hive.*

1 Ki. xxi. 14—23.

v. 36. *H. Blunt, Elisha.*

"This day hath made much work for tears in many an English mother, whose sons lie scatter'd on the bleeding ground. Many a widow's husband grovelling lies, coldly embracing the discolour'd earth."—*Shakespeare.*

"Mind alone (bear witness, earth and heaven) the living fountains in itself contains of beauteous and sublime: here hand in hand sit paramount the Graces."—*Akenside.*

[c] *Dr. Tristram.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

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1—7. (1) **sons,** the term probably includes descendants.[a] **rulers,** princes. **brought up,** nourished, and educated.[b] (2) **master's sons,** actual sons of Jehoram. **fenced city,** such Samaria was. (3) **fight for,** in this Jehu intimates that he is prepared to struggle for his claim to the throne. (4) **two kings,** Joram and Ahaziah.[c] (5) **over the house,** the officer in charge of the palace. **over the city,** governor of the town.[d] (6) **the heads,** *i.e.* behead them. (7) **baskets,** Heb. *dudim.*[e] Poss. Ahab had gathered Naboth's grapes in baskets.

Ahab's seventy sons (*v.* 1).—To those who are unaccustomed to the effects of polygamy and concubinage, this appears a very remarkable circumstance. In Homer, old King Priam is represented as having fifty sons and twelve daughters. Artaxerxes Mnemon, king of Persia, had, by his concubines, who amounted to three hundred and sixty, not less than one hundred and fifteen sons, besides three by his queen. "Muley Abdallah, who was emperor of Morocco in 1720, is said, by his four wives, and the many thousand women he had in his seraglio during his long reign, to have had seven hundred sons able to mount a horse; but the number of his daughters is not known" (Stewart's *Journey to Mequinez*).[f]

8—11. (8) **two heaps,** one on each side the gate. (9) **ye be righteous,** Jehu asks a judgment whether all the bloodshed lies on him. (10) **fall,** *etc.*,[a] he means that it is evidently the time when God's judgment on the house of Ahab must be fully accomplished. (11) **kinsfolk,** marg. acquaintance, friends. **priests,** those connected with the court.

Who slew all these? (*v.* 9). [A temperance sermon].—I. The case of the slaughtered. 1. Their number; 2. Their relationship: our countrymen; 3. Their death: violent, sad, untimely; 4. Their mourning survivors. II. The case of the slaughterer. Strong drink.—1. Works by stealth and stratagem; 2. Under patronage in high places; 3. A fashionable poisoner.

The heads of the slain (*v.* 8).—During this fight, ten tomauns were given for every head of the enemy that was brought to the prince; and it has been known to occur, after the combat was over, that prisoners have been put to death in cold blood, in order that the heads, which are immediately despatched to the king, and deposited in heaps at the palace-gate, might make a more considerable show.[b] Arrived at the palace of the pacha, inhabited by the dey, the first object that struck our eyes were six bleeding heads, ranged along before the entrance; and as if this dreadful sight were not sufficient of itself to harrow up the soul, it was still further aggravated by the necessity of stepping over them, in order to pass into the court. They were the heads of some turbulent agas, who had dared to murmur against the dey.[c] "The pacha of Diarbech has sent to Constantinople a circumstantial report of his expedition against the rebels of Mardin. This report has been accompanied by a thousand heads, severed from the vanquished. These sanguinary trophies have been exposed, as usual, at the gate of the seraglio. The Tartar who brought them has obtained a pelisse of honour; presents have

Jehu orders the death of Ahab's children

a "Including grandsons, and great grandsons. Ahab had now been dead about 14 years."—*Wordsworth.*

b "The existing usage in Persia, and in some other Eastern countries, is for the king to throw upon his nobles the cost of maintaining his numerous progeny."—*Kitto.*

c 2 Ki. ix. 21—28.

d 1 Ki. xxii. 26.

e Je. xxiv. 2.

f Burder.

the house of Ahab destroyed

a 1 Sa. iii. 19.

v. 10. *R. Warner, Old. Ch. of Eng. Prin.* iii. 66; *Bp. Heber,* ii. 190; *E. Caswall,* 211.

b Morier.

"The neighbouring plain with arms is cover'd o'er, the vale an iron harvest seems to yield, of thick-sprung lances in a waving field. The polish'd steel gleams terribly from far, and every moment nearer shows the war."—*Dryden.*

c Penanti's Residence in Algiers.

The last part of a sinner's life, continuing to abuse the forbearance of God, is necessarily the worst part of it.

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also been sent to the pacha."[d] A pyramid of heads, of a certain number of feet diameter, is sometimes exacted in Persia; and so indifferent are the executioners to the distresses of others, that they will select a head of peculiar appearance, and long beard, to grace the summit of it. Sir J. Malcolm says that "when Timour stormed Ispahan it was impossible to count the slain, but an account was taken of seventy thousand heads, which were heaped in pyramids as monuments of savage revenge."[e] "Three weeks before our arrival at Cattaro, they (the Montenegrins) had some skirmishes with the Turks, and had brought home several of their heads, which were added to the heap before the bishop's house."[f]

[d] *Literary Panorama.*

[e] *Sir J. Malcolm.*

[f] *Dodwell's Tour in Greece.*

Jehu orders the death of Ahaziah's brethren

12—17. (12) **shearinghouse,** *lit.* house of binding of the shepherds;[a] not identified. (13) **brethren,** not actual brothers, but nephews.[b] **children . . queen,** or queen-mother, *i.e.* Jezebel. (14) **pit,** or well of Beth-eked.[c] (15) **Jehonadab,**[d] called Jonadab, Jer. xxxv. 6. **he,** *i.e. Jehu.* **if it be,** these seem the words of Jehu. (16) **they made,** better *he made.*[e] (17) **remained,** comp. *v.* 11.

[a] Or poss. "house of binding the sheep in order to be shorn."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Comp. 2 Chr. xxi. 17, xxii. 1, 8. "The word *brethren*, as is generally allowed, here means *near relatives.*"—*Keil.*

[c] Comp. 1 Chr. ii. 55; Ge. xv. 19; Nu. x. 29; Ju. i. 16, iv. 11; 1 Sa. xv. 6; Je. xxxv.

[d] So the *Heb.*, but LXX. and *Josephus* say Jonadab blessed Jehu.

[e] So LXX. "They quickly came to a mutual understanding in their zeal against Baal worship."—*Ewald.*

v. 15. *J. Wesley, Wks.* v. 492; *J. Jowett*, 281.

v. 16. *T. Gisborne*, ii. 152; *A. Roberts*, ii. 171; *H. Blunt*, 185; *A. Gatty*, i. 392.

[f] *Dr. H. Humphrey.*

[g] *Bagster's Bible.*

Literary Panorama.

Sir J. Malcolm.

Dodwell's Tour in Greece.

Jehu's plot against Baal

a "The temple of Ashtaroth had been left standing at Jezreel; the temple of Baal was still standing in Samaria."—*Stanley.*

Giving the hand (*v.* 15).—Let us direct our attention to the following kinds of religion. The religion of—I. The eye and the ear. Such as have this are the worshippers of deified nature and not of the Deity Himself. II. Forms and ceremonies. III. Intellect. IV. Imagination. This is the religion of poetry and romance. V. Conscience. VI. The natural affections. VII. Morality. VIII. Animal excitement. IX. The heart. The heart, and the heart alone, is the seat of the religious affections; of holy love, of faith, of every pious emotion.[f]

True and false religion (*v.* 15).—Let us direct our attention to the following kinds of religion. The religion of—I. The eye and the ear. Such as have this are the worshippers of deified nature and not of the Deity Himself. II. Forms and ceremonies. III. Intellect. IV. Imagination. This is the religion of poetry and romance. V. Conscience. VI. The natural affections. VII. Morality. VIII. Animal excitement. IX. The heart. The heart, and the heart alone, is the seat of the religious affections; of holy love, of faith, of every pious emotion.[f]

Giving the hand (*v.* 15).—Jehu asked for the hand of Jehonadab not merely for the purpose of assisting him into the chariot, but that he might assist him in the prosecution of his desires; for giving the hand is considered as a pledge of friendship and fidelity, or a form of entering into a contract, among all nations. Mr. Bruce in his *Travels* relates that, when he entreated the protection of a sheik, the great people who were assembled came, "and after joining hands, repeated a kind of prayer about two minutes long; by which they declared themselves and their children accursed, if ever they lifted their hands against me, in the teil (or field), in the desert, or on the river; or, in case that I or mine should fly to them for refuge, if they did not protect me at the risk of their lives, their families, and their fortunes, or, as they emphatically expressed it, to the death of the last male child among them." Another striking instance occurs in Ockley's *History of the Saracens.* Tetha, just before he died, asked one of Ali's men if he belonged to the emperor of the faithful: and being informed that he did. "Give me, then," said he, "your hand, that I may put mine in it, and by this action renew the oath of fidelity which I have already made to Ali."[g]

[f] *Dr. H. Humphrey.*

[g] *Bagster's Bible.*

18—23. (18) **people together,** in an assembly. (19) **servants,** prob. worshippers.[a] **subtilty,** to cover his hidden design.[b] (20) **assembly,** the usual term for a relig. gathering.[c] (21) **house of Baal,** temple. **full,** lit. *fr. one month to the other*, as a vessel filled up to the brim.[d] (22) **vestry,** it is doubtful whether is meant the robe-chamber of the temple, or that Jehu gave a festal robe to each fr. the robe-chamber of the palace. **vestments,** prob. of white byssus.[e] (23) **of Baal**

only, this appeared to be a security fr. defiling presence of unbelievers.

Recompense according to deeds (*v.* 20, with 1 Ki. xxi. 29).—I. The nature and consequence of Ahab's penitence; and—II. The nature and consequences of Jehu's obedience.*f*

The portion of sin (*v.* 20).—The consul Q. S. Cæpio had taken the city of Toulouse by an act of more than common perfidy and treachery, and possessed himself of the immense hoards of wealth stored in the temples of the Gaulish deities. From this day forth, he was so hunted by calamity, all extremest evils and disasters, all shame and dishonour, fell so thick on himself and all who were his, and were so traced up by the moral instinct of mankind to this accursed thing which he had made his own, that any wicked gains fatal to their possessor acquired this name; and of such a one it would be said, "He has gold of Toulouse."*g*

24–28. (24) **his life,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xx. 39. (25) **Jehu said,** some signal was prob. appointed. The guard had waited outside the gates.*a* **city,** *etc.*, this term must mean much the same as holy of holies,*b* an inner sanctuary. (26) **images,** statues: idolatrous emblems in honour of other deities associated with Baal.*c* (27) **draught house,** place of refuse.*d* (28) **destroyed,** removed all traces of.

The indestructibility of sin.—If you cut a gash in a man's head, you may heal it; but you can never rub out, nor wash out, nor cut out, the scar. It may be a witness against you in his corpse: still it may be covered by the coffin, or hidden in the grave; but then it is not till decomposition shall take place that it shall entirely disappear. But, if you smite a soul, the scar remains: no coffin or grave shall hide it; no revolution, not even the upturning of the physical universe, shall obliterate it; no fire, not even the eternal furnaces of hell, shall burn it out.*e*

29–31. (29) **of Jeroboam,** 1 Ki. xii. 28, 29. (30) **fourth generation,**[a] fulfilled in Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah. (31) **no heed,** *etc.*, this verse is intended to show that personal piety was not the life of Jehu's actions.

The character of Jehu (*vv.* 30, 31).—Let us consider—I. The character of Jehu. Notice—1. What he did for God; 2. What he omitted to do. II. The lessons to be deduced from it. He teaches us—1. That we may perform many outward duties, and yet have no vital principle of religion within us; 2. That we may profess much zeal for God, and yet have a radical alienation of heart from Him; 3. That if ever we would be accepted of God hereafter, we must have our hearts right with Him now.*b*

One sin (*v.* 31).—If but one sin be unrepented of, the man continues still a bond-slave of hell. By one little hole a ship will sink into the bottom of the sea. The stab of a penknife to the heart will as well destroy a man as all the daggers that killed Cæsar in the senate-house. The soul will be strangled with one cord of vanity as well as with all the cart-ropes of iniquity: only the more sins, the more plagues and fiercer flames in hell; but he that lives and dies impenitent in one, it will be his destruction. One dram of poison will despatch a man, and one reigning sin will bring him to endless misery.*c*

32–36. (32) **cut Israel short,** lit. *make gashes in Israel:* cut **off** portions of its territory. **Hazael,**[a] 2 Ki. viii. 12. (33)

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b For the word see Ge. iii. 1.
c Le. xxvii. 36; Nu. xxix. 35; De. xvi. 8.
d Keil. "Ancient temples had vast courts round them, wh. could contain many thousands."—*Spk. Com.*
e Wordsworth; Jamieson.
f Dr. G. Spence.
g Trench.

Baal destroyed

a For the scene comp. Ju. xvi. 27–30.
b Ewald.
c Morers. "There Baal was seated aloft, with the gods of Phœnicia round him."—*Stanley.*
d Ezr. vi. 11; Da. ii. 5, iii. 29.
e Dr. Thompson.

Jehu's partial reformation

a 2 Ki. xiii. 1–10, xiv. 23, xv. 8–12.
vv. 30, 31. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* ii. 16; *Bp. Medley*, 329; *Canon Wordsworth*, iv. 161.
v. 31. *W. Strong*, 289; *W. Reading*, ii. 443; *H. Goodwin*, iii. 48.
b C. Simeon, M.A.
There is no sin so little as not to kindle an eternal fire.
c R. Bolton.

death and burial of Jehu

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Gilead, Jos. xxii. 1—9. **Aroer,** De. ii. 36. **Arnon,** Ju. xi. 18. **Bashan,** Nu. xxi. 33—35; De. iii. 1—10. (34) **might,** personal courage; or promptitude of action; zeal. (35) **Jehoahaz,** *whom Jehovah holds.* (36) **in Samaria,** as distinct fr. Jezreel, where Ahab mostly resided.

Plenary inspiration of the Bible (*v.* 34).—I. The Book and things written therein. II. How the Bible may be demonstrated the Word of God, and prove that the Author of the Old is the Author also of the New Testament. III. In it we are taught that repentance and faith are both requisite to salvation.[b]

Reading the Bible.—When Mr. Hone, who wrote the *Every-day Book*, and was of sceptical views, was travelling through Wales, he stopped at a cottage to ask for a drink of water, and a little girl answered him, "Oh, yes! sir, I have no doubt mother will give you some milk. Come in." He went in and sat down. The little girl was reading her Bible. Mr. Hone said, "Well, my little girl, you are getting your task?" "No, sir. I am not," she replied, "I am reading the Bible." "Yes," said he. "you are getting your task out of the Bible?" "Oh, no," she replied, "it is no task to read the Bible; I love the Bible." "And why do you love the Bible?" said he. Her simple, child-like answer was, "I thought everybody loved the Bible." Her own love to the precious volume had made her innocently believe that everybody else was equally delighted to read God's Word. Mr. Hone was so touched with the sincerity of that expression, that he read the Bible himself, and instead of being an opponent to the things of God, came to be a friend of Divine truth.[c]

a 1 Ki. xix. 15—17.

b *R. Skipsey, B.A.*

"As the profoundest philosophy of ancient Rome and Greece lighted her taper at Israel's altar, so the sweetest strains of the pagan muse were swept from harps attuned on Zion's hill."—*Bp. Thomson.*

"The authenticity refers to the matter in the Bible as being true, the genuineness refers to the writers of the Bible, as being the actual persons to whom the several parts are attributed."—*John Bate.*

c *Spurgeon.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

B.C. 884.

Athaliah, Jehosheba, Joash

1—3. (1) **Athaliah,** 2 Ki. viii. 18. At this time she held the influential position of queen-mother.[a] **seed royal,** remnants of the house of David; some were children of her own son. (2) **Jehosheba,** comp. 2 Chr. xxii. 11. **daughter of Joram,** but not by Athaliah. **bedchamber,** where the mattresses for sleeping were put by day.[b] (3) **house,** *etc.*, priest's residence within the temple courts. Jehosheba was wife of Jehoiada the priest, so dwelt in the temple.[c]

Athaliah's massacre of the seed royal (*v.* 1).—An independent sovereignty, in one family of Jews, had always been preserved on the mountain of Samen, and the royal residence was upon a high pointed rock, called the Jew's Rock; several other inaccessible mountains served as natural fortresses for this people, now grown very considerable by frequent accessions of strength from Palestine and Arabia, whence the Jews had been expelled. Gideon and Judith were then king and queen of the Jews; and their daughter Judith (whom, in Amhara, they called Esther, and sometimes Saat, *i.e.* fire) was a woman of great beauty, and talents for intrigue; had been married to the governor of a small district called Bugna, in the neighbourhood of Lasta, both which countries were likewise much infected with Judaism. Judith had made so strong a party, that she resolved to attempt the subversion of the Christian religion, and with it the succesion in the line of Solomon. The children of the royal family were, at this time, in virtue of the old law, confined on the

a "She saw herself a stranger in a strange land, an alien by birth and religion, without common sympathies bet. herself and the people among whom she occupied so high a place; and without support fr. the remaining members of the family to wh. she had become allied. What hindered that she should herself seize the dropped reins of the government?"—*Kitto.*

b "The bedchamber in the E. is a small closet, into wh.

almost inaccessible mountain of Damo, in Tigré. The short reign, sudden and unexpected death of the late king, Aizor, and the desolation and contagion which an epidemical disease had spread both in court and capital, the weak state of Del Naad, who was to succeed Aizor, and was an infant; all these circumstances together impressed Judith with an idea that now was the time to place her family upon the throne, and establish her religion by the extermination of the race of Solomon. Accordingly, she surprised the rock Damo, and slew the whole of the princes there, to the number, it is said, of about four hundred. Some nobles of Amhara, upon the first news of the catastrophe at Damo, conveyed the infant king, Del Naad, now the only remaining prince of his race, into the powerful and loyal province of Shoa, and by this means the royal family was preserved, to be again restored.[d]

4—8. (4) **rulers,** *etc.*, names given, 2 Chr. xiii. 1. **captains,** a part of the royal guard.[a] **guard,** lit. *runners.* **covenant,** to aid in restoring the rightful king. (5) **enter in,** allusion seems evidently to the weekly service of the Levites,[b] **king's house,** royal palace, where Athaliah was. (6) **gate of Sur,** 2 Chr. xiii. 5; the gate by wh. the palace was usually quitted for the temple. **gate . . guard,** another of the palace gates, *v.* 19. **broken down,**[c] poss. meaning that the scheme be not frustrated by a sudden invasion fr. the palace. (7) **go forth,** on completion of week of service. These were to remain, and so a double force of priests and Levites was engaged.[d] **within the ranges,** past the appointed bounds: or within the *ranks* of the soldiers.

True safety (*v.* 8).—A minister who lived near the seashore was preaching one day to a congregation in which were several sailors, who had just been shipwrecked, and had narrowly escaped drowning. He spoke of the danger to which our souls are exposed of being lost for ever on account of our sins, and compared sinners to drowning men, who catch at anything to save them. When he compared Jesus to a plank floating on the waters for the drowning men to lay hold of, he told them how safe those were who laid hold of this plank, for, "O my friends," said he, "this plank bears—this plank bears!" One of those sailors was converted by the sermon he heard that day. Fourteen years afterward the minister was called to see a dying sailor. It was the same man who had been led to become a Christian by the sermon just spoken of. He thanked the minister for that sermon, and especially for what he said about Jesus as "the plank that bears." "Those words," said he, "have been a great comfort to me ever since. And now I die in peace, because I know that this plank bears." Those were the last words that he spoke. Clinging closely to this plank, he was landed safely on the heavenly shores beyond the reach of storms or dangers. And here we see how that good minister, like the air, was supporting life when he preached Jesus to those sailors, and spoke of Him as "the plank that bears."

9—12. (9) **came to,** fitted in the scheme of; took their appointed places. (10) **David's spears,** *etc.*, these prob. hung in temple porch: there would be enough for all the soldiers.[a] **(11) from the right,** *etc.*, *i.e.* quite across the temple court.

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are flung during the day the mattresses and other bedding materials spread on the floors or divans of the sitting rooms by night." — *Jamieson.*

c 2 Chr. xxii. 10-12.

See *Bp. Hall, Com. vv.* 1, 2. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 451; *R. W. Evans, Script Biog.* ii. 132.

d *Bruce's Travels.*

Jehoiada's plot

a "Prob. those called Cherethites (1 Ki. i. 38)."—*Spk. Com.*

b 2 Ch. xxiii. 4—8; Comp. 1 Chr. ix. 25, xxiii. — xxvi.

c "*Ewald* trans. 'according to custom;' *Keil*, 'in defence;' *Furst*, 'alternately.'" — *See Spk. Com.*

d "By choosing the Sabbath-day, he doubled the number of the official forces of the temple, without exciting suspicion."— *Wordsworth.*

"*Hak-kari*, fr. *karah*, to bore, or stab, so meaning, the executioners."—*Gesenius.*

"The *Carians*; mercenary soldiers."—*Stanley.*

"Prob. the temple-watch of the Levites." — *Bertheau.*

Jehoiada crowns Joash

a "For the week-

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ly turn of Levites to have entered the temple *in arms* would have prematurely awakened suspicion. They were, therefore, furnished with swords and spears, which, as we now first learn, were deposited within the temple." — *Kitto.*

b 2 Ch. iv. 1; 1 Ki. viii. 54.

c Burder.

"Little joys refresh us constantly, like housebread, and never bring disgust; and great ones, like sugar-bread, briefly, and then bring it."—*Richter.*

Athaliah is slain

a Throne: *Arabic*, "platform; scaffold." — *Gesenius, Keil.*

"A stage under the pillar, which formed the usual station of the kings when they came to the temple."—*Kitto.*

2 Ki. xxiii. 3; 2 Ch. vi. 13, xxiii. 13, xxxiv. 31.

b 2 Ch. xxiii. 13, marg.

c Josephus.

vv. 12—17. *R. Douglas*, i. 234.

d Paxton.

Jehoash begins to reign

a Ex. xix., xxiv.; Jos. xxiv. 1—25; Ne. x. 1.

b 2 Ch. xxi. 6.

c Gesenius.

altar, wh. was right in front of the porch.[b] (12) **testimony**, Book of the Law. It might however refer to the oath of coronation.

Oriental expressions of joy (*v.* 12).—The way by which females in the East express their joy, is by gently applying one of their hands to their mouths. This custom appears to be very ancient, and seems to be referred to in several places of Scripture. Pitts, describing the joy with which the leaders of their sacred caravans are received in the several towns of Barbary through which they pass, says, "This Emir Hagge, into whatever town he comes, is received with a great deal of joy, because he is going about so religious a work. The women get upon the top of the houses to view the parade, where they keep striking their forefingers on their lips softly as fast as they can, making a joyful noise all the while." The sacred writers suppose two different methods of expressing joy by a quick motion of the hand: the clapping of the hands, and that of one hand only, though these are confounded in our translation. The former of these methods obtained anciently, as an expression of malignant joy; but other words, which our version translates clapping the hands, signify the applying of only one hand somewhere with softness, in testimony of a joy of a more agreeable kind. Thus in 2 Kings xi. 12, and Psalm xlvii. 1, it should be rendered in the singular, "Clap your hand," and as the word implies gentleness, it may allude to such an application of the hand to the mouth as has now been recited.[c]

13—16. (13) **heard**, comp. 1 Ki. i. 40, 41, all being ready they did not care for her hearing now. **came**, to quell disturbance by her royal presence. **into the temple**, the guards at once making way for her. (14) **pillar**, or raised platform.[a] **princes**, captains of hundreds. **treason**, lit. *conspiracy!*[b] (15) **ranges**, of the temple, that her blood might not defile the temple-courts. (16) **the way**, *etc.*, eastern gate toward the Kedron valley.[c]

The place by a pillar (*v.* 14).—The Orientals looked upon a seat by a pillar or column as a particular mark of respect. In the *Iliad* Homer places Ulysses on a lofty throne by a pillar, and in the *Odyssey* he more than once alludes to the same custom. The kings of Israel were, for the same reason, placed at their coronation, or on days of public festivity, by a pillar in the house of the Lord. Joash, the king of Judah, stood by a pillar when he was admitted to the throne of his ancestors; and Josiah, one of his successors, when he made a covenant before the Lord.[d]

17—21. (17) **covenant**,[a] comp. 2 Sa. v. 3. (18) **house of Baal**, showing that one had been erected at Jerus.[b] **images**, lit. *similitudes.*[c] **officers**, or *offices*; prob. indicating a restoration of the full temple service. (19) **brought down**, down the valley of the Tyropœan, avoiding the entrance near to wh. Athaliah had been slain. (20) **rejoiced**, at restoration of legitimate sovereign. (21) **Jehoash**, contracted to *Jeash*, "whom Jehovah bestowed."

National effects of peace (*v.* 20).—

Meanwhile fair Peace secures the quiet plain,
Fair Peace, in whose auspicious easy reign

They first instructed stubborn steers to bow
Their necks, to wear the yoke, and draw the plough.
Peace glads the vines to yield a large produce,
And swells the rip'ning grape with kindly juice;
That the pleased peasant, from paternal bowl,
May pour large floods of wine to cheer his soul.
Peace plies the prong and brights the shining share;
Let eating rust destroy the tools of war.[d]

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d Tibullus.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

B.C. 878.

reign of Jehoash

1—3. (1) **of Beersheba,** Ge. xxi. 14.[a] (2) **all his days,** so long as the influence of Jehoiada continued.[b] In Jehoiada the title of high priest was revived.[c] (3) **high places,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xv. 14.[d]

Shechem (*v.* 1).—In the green vale, all sparkling with fountains, and alive with the murmur of streamlets and the song of birds, stood the ancient city of Sychar. The city was ancient, though the name given to it by the Evangelist was new. The first spot where Abraham pitched his tent in Canaan was in the plain of Moreh, at Sichem (Gen. xii. 6). When Jacob came back from his long exile he encamped before Shalem, a city of Shechem (xxxiiii. 18); and he then bought that very "parcel of a field" to which the Evangelist refers (John iv. 5). Sichem, or Shechem, was the primitive name of the Canaanitish city; and the name was still retained when Jeroboam made it the capital of his new kingdom (2 Kings xii.) When the kingdom was overthrown by the Assyrians, and the Jews taken captive, colonists from the East were placed in their deserted cities. The country having been desolated by war and deprived of its inhabitants wild beasts multiplied, just as they do at the present day in Palestine. The beasts became the terror and scourge of the new colonists. The heathen strangers attributed the calamity to the anger of the local deity, of whose peculiar mode of worship they were ignorant. They therefore asked for a Jewish priest to instruct them; and when they had heard his teachings they did what thousands still do—"they feared the Lord and served their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 24—41). Such was the origin of the Samaritans. They were strangers in race and in religion, and consequently the exclusive Jews would have "no dealings with them" (John iv. 9). Being thus separated from their brethren and rejected by the Jews they built a temple of their own on the summit of Mount Gerizim, about the year B.C. 420. Shechem, situated at the northern base of Gerizim, became henceforth the metropolis of the Samaritans. Its name was in after times changed to Sychar, which appears to signify "purchase," and was probably intended to commemorate Jacob's purchase of the "parcel of a field" adjoining it. This meaning accords well with the general tone of the narrative of our Lord's interview with the woman at the well. About forty years after Jesus' visit Sychar was rebuilt, and renamed Neapolis—"new city"—a name which still clings to it in the Arabic form, Nablous.

a 1 Ki. xix. 3.

b 2 Ch. xxiv. 2, 3, 15—23. 'The part played by Jehoiada raised the priesthood to an importance wh. it had never before attained in the history of the Jewish nation, and wh. it never afterwards altogether lost." — *Stanley.*

c 2 Ch. xxvi. 20, xxxi. 10, xxxiv. 9; Je. xxix. 26.

d "The popular fondness for the private and disorderly rites performed in the groves and recesses of hills was so inveterate that even the most powerful monarchs had been unable to accomplish their suppression." — *Jamieson.*

"A statesman, we are told, should follow public opinion. Doubtless; ... as a coachman follows his horses; having firm hold on the reins, and guiding them."— *Hare.*

4—8. (4) **dedicated things,** the consecrated money, described in foll. sentences. **passeth,** or is numbered at the **census.**[a] **set at,** the redemption price of those who had devoted

Jehoash repairs the temple

a This was a

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poll-tax of half a shekel; see Ex. xxx. 12—16.

b Le. xxvii. 1—13; Nu. xviii. 15. 16.

c "The collection was to be made in all the cities of Judah (2 Chr. xxiv. 5), and the various priests and Levites were to collect in their own neighbourhoods." — *Spk. Com.*

v. 7. *F. H. Hutton, 52.*

"So work the honey-bees, creatures that by a rule in nature teach the act of order to a peopled kingdom." —*Shakespeare.*

d Dr. Stoughton.

themselves by vow to Jehovah.[b] **cometh,** *etc., i.e.* freewill offerings. (5) **of his acquaintance,** or friend.[c] **breaches,** dilapidations. 2 Chr. xxiv. 7. (6) **not repaired,** 2 Chr. xxiv. 5. (7) **receive no more,** *i.e.* directly. Joash proposes a scheme in place of collection by the priests. **deliver it,** give it up, as far as your collecting is concerned. (8) **consented,** it involved for a time yielding their own allowances.

Influence of piety.—Sir Matthew Hale found that prayer gave a "tincture of devotion" to all secular employments; that "it was a Christian chemistry, converting those acts which are materially natural and civil into acts truly and formally religious, whereby all life is rendered interpretatively a service to Almighty God." He discovered in habitual devotion what Herbert calls "the elixir" of life.

"This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told."

And amidst the cares, and troubles, and vexations, and sorrows of secular life, his fervent spirit was a consolation and a joy; "a sun that gave light in the midst of darkness, a fortress that kept safe in the greatest danger, that never could be taken unless self-betrayed." He found the fear of God like the tree put by Moses into the waters; it cures, he says, the disorders and uneasiness of all conditions. A conscience full of peace he pronounces "a Goshen to and within itself, when the rest of the world without and round about a man is like an Egypt for plagues and darkness." To lose this, he said, is like Samson, "to lose the lock wherein, next to God, our strength lieth."[d]

Jehoiada makes a treasury

9—16. (9) **took,** by king's order, 2 Chr. xxiv. 8. **altar,** great brazen altar before the porch. **all the money,** the evident purpose of the arrangement was to encourage an increase of freewill offerings. (10) **king's scribe,** auditing as a government official. **in bags,**[a] each holding a fixed quantity. **told,** counted, 1 Ki. viii. 5. (11) **told,** not same word as *v.* 10, here *weighed*, or *measured out.* (12) **laid out,** Heb. *went forth.* (13) **not made,**[b] comp. 2 Chr. xxiv. 14. (14) **gave that,** the first sum of offerings. (15) **reckoned not,**[c] as overseers were priests, etc., this shows they had not misappropriated the previous money, only had been negligent. (16) **trespass money,** Nu. v. 8, 10.

Money-bags (*v.* 10).—It appears to have been usual in the East for money to be put into bags, which, being ascertained as to the exact sum deposited in each, were sealed, and probably labelled, and thus passed currently. Instances of this kind may be traced in the Scriptures, at least so far as that money was thus conveyed, and also thus delivered, from superior to inferior officers, for distribution, as in the passage referred to in this article. Major Rennel, in giving an abstract of the History of Tobit, says, "we find him again at Nineveh, from whence he despatches his son Tobias to Rages by way of Ecbatana, for the money. At the latter place he marries his kinswoman Sara, and sends a messenger on to Rages. The mode of keeping and delivering the money was exactly as at present in the East. Gabriel, who kept the money in trust, 'brought forth bags, which were sealed up, and gave them to him,' and received in return the handwriting or acknow-

a "We see here a distinct indication of a practice still followed in the East where large sums of money are concerned, as in the disbursements of the government, and in the taxes and tributes paid to the crown. The money is in such cases deposited in long narrow bags, each containing a certain sum, and carefully sealed with the official seal." —*Kitto.*

b "These were, however, provided after the repairs of temple buildings were complete."—*Wordsworth.*

"The narrative

ledgment which Tobias had taken care to require of his father before he left Nineveh. The money, we learn, was left in trust, or as a deposit, and not on usury, and, as it may be concluded, with Tobit's seal on the bags. In the East in the present times a bag of money passes (for some time at least) currently from hand to hand, under the authority of a banker's seal, without any examination of its contents.[d]

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in the Chronicles is a commentary on the other in the Kings." — *Michaelis.*

c 2 Ki. xxii. 7; 2 Chr. xxiv. 12.

d *Burder.*

17—21. (17) **Gath,**[a] Jos. xi. 22. **set his face,** fig. for formed a determination. (18) **took,** *etc.*, only however after his army was defeated. 2 Chr. xxiv. 20—23. (19) **written,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxiv. (20) **conspiracy,** connection of it with Joash's religious failure narrated; 2 Chr. xxiv. 14—20. **Millo,** 1 Ki. ix. 24. **Silla,** poss. for *meshillah*, a street: otherwise not known. (21) **with his fathers,** in Jerus., but not in sepulchre of the kings.[b]

death of Joash

a 1 Ki. ii. 39, iv. 21; 2 Chr. xi. 8.

b 2 Chr. xxiv. 27.

False peace (*v.* 18).—Your peace, sinner, is that terribly prophetic calm which the traveller occasionally perceives upon the higher Alps. Everything is still. The birds suspend their notes, fly low, and cower down with fear. The hum of bees among the flowers is hushed. A horrible stillness rules the hour, as if Death had silenced all things by stretching over them his awful sceptre. Perceive ye not what is surely at hand? The tempest is preparing; the lightning will soon cast abroad its flames of fire. Earth will rock with thunder-blasts; granite peaks will be dissolved; all nature will tremble beneath the fury of the storm. Yours is that solemn calm to-day, sinner. Rejoice not in it, for the hurricane of wrath is coming, the whirlwind and the tribulation which shall sweep you away and utterly destroy you.[c]

c *Spurgeon.*

"He that has peace with God is armed cap-a-pie: he is covered from head to foot in a panoply. The arrow may fly against it, but it cannot pierce it; for peace with God is a mail so strong, that the broadsword of Satan itself may be broken in twain ere it can pierce the flesh. Oh! take care that you are at peace with God; for, if you are not, you ride forth to-morrow's fight unarmed, naked; and God help the man that is unarmed when he has to fight with hell and earth!" —*Spurgeon.*

Blessings of peace.—

O beauteous Peace,
Sweet union of a state! what else but thou
Gives safety, strength, and glory to a people!
I bow, lord constable, beneath the snow
Of many years; yet in my breast revives
A youthful flame. Methinks I see again
Those gentle days renew'd that bless'd our isle,
Ere by this fury of division,
Worse than our Ætna's most destructive fires,
It desolated sunk. I see our plains,
Unbounded, waving with the gifts of harvest,
Our seas with commerce throng'd, our busy ports,
With cheerful toil. Our Enna blooms afresh;
Afresh the sweets of thee, my Hybla, flow:
Our nymphs and shepherds, sporting in each vale,
Inspire new song, and wake the pastoral reed.[d]

d *Thomson.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

B.C. 856.

1—7. (1) **three and twentieth,** Josephus, with prob. says, *one and twentieth*; see *v.* 10. (2) **Jeroboam,** 1 Ki. xii. 26—30. (3) **Benhadad,** prob. the favourite name for the Syrian kings. **all their days,** lit. *all the days*; either of Jehoahaz, or of the 2 Syr. kings.[a] (4) **besought,** in a spirit of repentance.[b] (5) **a saviour,**[c] either a temporary deliverer in this reign, or Joash

reign of Jehoahaz

a Ju. ii. 13, 14, iii. 7, 8; Ho. v. 11.

b Ps. lxxviii. 34.

c Ne. ix. 27; Is. xix. 20; Ob. 21.

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the following king. **went out,** *etc.*, i.e. gained independence. **tents,**[d] houses. (6) **the grove,** 1 Ki. xvi. 33. (7) **leave,** *etc.*, Syr. king fixed within very precise and narrow limits the standing army of Israelite king.

Threshing in the East (*v.* 7).—In modern Turkey, the custom of treading out the corn by oxen is still practised. This is a much quicker way than our method of beating out the corn with the flail, but less cleanly: for, as it is performed in the open air, upon any round level plat of ground, daubed over with cow-dung, to prevent as much as possible the earth, sand, or gravel from rising, a great quantity of them all, notwithstanding these precautions, must unavoidably be taken up with the grain; at the same time the straw, which is their only fodder, is by this means shattered to pieces. To this circumstance the sacred historian alludes, with great force and propriety, in his brief description of the wretched state to which the kingdom of the ten tribes had been reduced by the arms of Hazael, king of Syria: "Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing."[e]

death and burial of Joash

8—13. (8) **written,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. x. 34. (9) **in his stead,** marg. adds, *alone*. (10) **Joash,** *etc.*, ch. xii. (11) **Jeroboam,** *v.* 2. (12) **his might,** ch. xiv. 8—14.[a] (13) **Jeroboam,** known as Jeroboam the Second.

Hieroglyphical embassy (*vv.* 15—18).—After the Scythians had laid waste their country before the legions of Darius, and thus reduced the invading army to the greatest distress for want of provisions, they sent an ambassador to the Persian king to present him with a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. The ambassador was asked what these presents meant. He answered that he had nothing else in charge but to deliver them, and return with all speed; but that the Persians, if they were ingenious, would discover what interpretation to put upon them. Darius, judging according to his wishes, gave it as his opinion that they were tokens of submission. "The mouse," said he, "being bred in the earth, indicates that they yield up their lands; the frog, living in water, that they yield up also their lakes, rivers, etc.; the bird, represented all the wild and tame fowl; and the delivering up the five arrows was the same with the Scythians as delivering up arms is with other nations." "Alas!" said Gobryas, one of the seven princes who had ejected the magi, "it is far otherwise. For, O Persians! unless as birds ye fly in the air, or as mice ye retreat under the earth, or as frogs ye swim in the water, ye shall never return whence ye came, but shall perish by these arrows." And so, in fact, it turned out; for it was only by the merest accident that Darius and the whole of the army were not cut off but the Scythians.[b]

Elisha visited by Joash

14—19. (14) **sick,**[a] suggesting the natural feature of his dying in contrast with the translation of Elijah. **over his face,** in his presence. **chariot,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. ii. 12. (15) **take bow,** Elisha was about to give a prophecy in a symbolical act.[b] (16) **Elisha . . hands,** to indicate that the promised triumphs would be due to the Divine aid. (17) **eastward,** so looking towards the country that the king of Syria had occupied.[c]

[d] "The use of this idiom shows trace of their old nomadic life."—*Spk. Com.*

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

"The house of correction is the fittest hospital for those cripples whose legs are lame through their own laziness."—*Fuller.*

[e] *Paxton.*

[a] Comp. 2 Chr. xxv. 17—24.

"Just are the ways of God, and justifiable to men; unless there be who think not God at all. If any be, they walk obscure; for of such doctrine never was there school, but the heart of the fool, and no man therein God but himself." — *Milton.*

[b] *Percy Anec.*

[a] "When at last his end comes, in a great old age, he is not rapt away like Elijah,

Aphek, 1 Ki. xx. 26. (18) **upon the ground,** downwards to the earth in token of the prostration and subjection of the Syrians.[d] (19) **wroth,** bec. Joash did not execute his bidding with any fulness of zeal.[e]

Elisha's reproof to Joash (*vv.* 18, 19).—Consider—I. What messages of mercy God has sent to us—1. By significant emblems; 2. By express promises; 3. By the declarations and examples of dying saints. II. Whence it is that we profit so little by them. The fault is in ourselves alone, just as it was in the king of Israel. 1. Our desires are faint; 2. Our expectations low; 3. Our exertions languid. Conclusion:—(1) Improve the opportunities which God affords you by His ministers; (2) Trifle not with the impressions which are at any time upon your mind.[f]

An answer by symbol (*v.* 17, see also on *vv.* 8—13).—It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow or cast a spear into the country which an army intended to invade. Justin says that as soon as Alexander the Great had arrived on the coast of Ionia he threw a dart into the country of the Persians. The dart, spear or arrow thus thrown was an emblem of the commencement of hostilities. Virgil represents Turnus as giving the signal of attack by throwing a spear.

> Who first, he cried, with me the foe will dare?
> Then hurl'd a dart, the signal of the war.[g]

Servius in his note upon this place shows that it was a custom to proclaim war in this way. The *pater patratus*, or chief of the Feciales, a sort of heralds, went to the confines of the enemy's country, and, after some solemnities, said, with a loud voice, "I wage war with you, for such and such reasons," and then threw in a spear. It was then the business of the parties thus defied or warned to take the subject into consideration, and if they did not, within thirty days, come to some accommodation, the war was begun.[h]

20—25. (20) **bands,** *etc.*, plundering companies. **coming in,**[a] *i.e.* spring time. (21) **spied a band,** the band of *v.* 20. **sepulchre,** prob. a rock-cave, of wh. the stone cover would be easily removed. **let down,** simply *came to touch*.[b] (22) **Hazael,** *etc.*, *v.* 3. (23) **cast he them,** so the subsequent captivity was regarded.[c] (24) **Benhadad,** *v.* 3. (25) **cities,** *etc.*, prob. some the Syr. king had taken *west* of the Jordan.

The virtue of a corpse (*v.* 21).—The chief lesson this story teaches is the mighty influence a good man may exert after his decease. I. We should be ambitious of this influence. Our lives at the longest are brief. That portion of our lives devoted to holy aims is briefer still. How consolatory and inspiring is the fact that when our brief life is finished we can still be a power for good. Think that from your seat in glory you may see men inspired by the memory of *your* generosity, zeal, courage, purity, and prayerfulness. *Their* deeds in turn are remembered, and inspire others. Thus *you* will have a share in blessing men to the end of time. II. Let me remind you of how much we owe to this influence. I appeal to you, Would *you* be what you are were it not for the memory of the dead? III. The best methods for securing this posthumous influence for good. 1. By publishing through the press our thoughts and opinions: how many a book is like the body of Elisha—lifeless itself, yet giving life; 2. By a definite and public profession of religion; 3. By active

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but buried with a splendid funeral; a sumptuous tomb was shown in after ages over his grave in the royal city of Samaria." —*Stanley.*

b "Hostilities were usually proclaimed by a herald, sometimes by a king or general making a public and formal discharge of an arrow into the enemy's country."—*Jamieson.*

c 2 Ki. x. 32, 33.

d *Wordsworth.*

e Comp. Mk. vi. 5, 6.

v. 14. *H. Blunt, Elisha; J. Jowett, Lect.* 18.

f *C. Simeon, M.A.*

g *Pitt.*

h *Burder.*

death, burial, and tomb of Elisha

a 2 Sa. xi. 1.

b "The body was not enclosed in a coffin, but only wrapt in linen cloths, so that it would easily come in contact with another body, already laid there." —*Wordsworth.*

c De. xxxii. 36; La. iii 31, 32; Mi. vii. 18—20; Lu. i. 54, 55, 72, 73.

v. 25. *J. Macqueen,* 61.

"'Paid the debt of nature.' No; it is not paying a debt — it is rather like bring-

B.C. *cir.* 906.

ing a note to a bank to obtain solid gold in exchange for it. In this case you bring this cumbrous body, which is nothing worth, and which you could not wish to retain long; you lay it down, and receive for it from the eternal treasures—liberty, victory, knowledge, rapture." —*J. Foster.*

d R. A. Griffin.

e Harmer.

engagement in Christian work. IV. Remember, whether we wish it or not, we must all exert some influence after death; some influence either for weal or woe. Let us then be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy.[d]

Burials in the East (*v.* 21).—With us the poorest people have their coffins; if the relations cannot afford them, the parish is at the expense. In the East, on the contrary, they are not at all made use of in our times: Turks and Christians, Thevenot assures us, agree in this. The ancient Jews probably buried their dead in the same manner; neither was the body of our Lord, it seems, put into a coffin; nor that of Elisha, whose bones were touched by the corpse that was let down a little after into his sepulchre (2 Kings xiii. 21). It is no objection to this account that the widow of Nain's son is represented as carried forth to be buried in a *soros*, or bier, for the present inhabitants of the Levant, who are well known to lay their dead in the earth unenclosed, carry them frequently out to burial in a kind of coffin; so Russel in particular describes the bier used by the Turks at Aleppo as a kind of coffin, much in the form of ours, only the lid rises with a ledge in the middle. Christians, indeed, that same author tells us, are carried to the grave in an open bier; but as the most common kind of bier there very much resembles our coffins, that used by the people of Nain might very possibly be of the same kind, in which case the word *soros* was very proper.[e]

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

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reign of Jehoahaz

a Spk. Com.
b Wordsworth.
c 2 Ki. ix. 26.
d Ju. i. 36.
"What poor things are kings! what poorer things are nations to obey him, whom a petty passion does command! Fate, why wast made so ridiculous? Oh, I am mortal! Men but flatter me, oh, fate! Why were not kings made more than men? Or why will people have us to be more? Alas! we govern others, but ourselves we cannot rule; as our eyes that do see all other things, but cannot see themselves." — *Fontaine.*
e Bacon.
f R. T. S. Anec.

1—7. (1) **second year,** to fit the chronological references it is necessary to suppose that Joash of Israel reigned two years along with his father.[a] (2) **Jehoaddan,** *whom Jehovah adorns.* (3) **not like David,** *see* 2 Chr. xxv. 2. **as Joash,** *i.e.* began well and ended ill.[b] (4) **high places,** 1 Ki. xv. 14. (5) **slew,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xii. 21. (6) **children,** *etc.*, according to De. xxiv. 16. This is remarked as a deference to the law, in opposition to established custom.[c] (7) **valley of salt,** broad open plain S. end of Dead Sea. **Selah,** Petra.[d] **Joktheel,** *i.e.* subdued by God.

The cares of kings.—A king must have a special care of five things, if he would not have his crown to be but to him "unhappy felicity." 1. That "pretended holiness" be not in the Church, for that is twofold iniquity; 2. That "useless equity" sit not in the chancery, for that is "foolish pity;" 3. That "useless iniquity" keep not the exchequer, for that is a cruel robbery; 4. That "faithful rashness" be not his general, for that will bring, but too late, repentance; 5. That "faithless prudence" be not his secretary, for that is a snake beneath the green grass.[e]

A pious king.—On one occasion his majesty George III. was engaged in conversation with a pious man on the subject of religion, which, after some persuasion from the king, he defined in a very clear and evangelical manner. A bishop happened to be present, whose preaching was entirely of a moral caste, but never pointed to a Saviour, to whom his majesty gave this reproof, "There, my lord, you never tell us these things."[f] When his late majesty William IV. was Duke of Clarence, and on the eve of sailing for the first time as commander from Plymouth,

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he was accosted in the dockyard by a poor boy, who did not know he was a prince, and who supplicated that he would give a berth in his ship to save him from starving. The prince being pleased with the countenance of the applicant, told him to go on board the *Pegasus*, and say the captain had sent him. His royal highness afterwards ordered him to be completely clothed and equipped in the habit of a midshipman, and to be rated as such. When the *Pegasus* arrived at Newfoundland, the prince met with another equally striking occasion of evincing his benevolence. He accidentally saw a poor widow, who was burdened with a family of fourteen children, with scarcely any means of supporting them. Affected by their situation, the benevolent tar, after surveying the family group, made choice of one boy, whose appearance pleased him, and treated him as he had done the other object of his patronage. During the whole of his royal highness's voyages abroad, these two little fellows received from him all the attention of a parent. They always stood at his back when he dined, and were never permitted to do anything servile. When the prince returned to Plymouth, he completed his paternal kindness by sending them both to school, and making every necessary preparation to enable them to prove themselves worthy of so noble a benefactor.*g*

Inward peace in the conscience doth not infer having peace with God. By "inward peace in the conscience" we mean the opposite to pangs, troubles, storms of conscience. And this peace is the common temper of the most consciences in the world; they have no disquiet at all. They say, "peace, peace," when there is no peace.

g R. T. S.

8—12. (8) **sent messengers,** for the occasion, *see* 2 Chr. xxv. 13. **come . . face,** a challenge to battle, or a trial of strength. (9) **thistle,** a low shrub, representing Amaziah. **cedar,** repres. powerful king of Israel. **wild beast,** the army of Israelite king. (10) **glory,** enjoy thy honour, be content with it.*a* (11) **went up,** taking the advantage of the first move.*b* **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10. (12) **put,** *etc.*, defeated.

Speaking by parables (*v.* 9).—We have here another beautiful instance of the way in which the ancients conveyed instruction or reproof in parables, apologues, or riddles. Jehoash, the king of Israel, the author of the parable, compares himself to a cedar: and Amaziah, the king of Judah, to a thistle. It would no doubt be very annoying to Amaziah to be represented by a thistle, and his opponent by a cedar. Thus in India, the people to show how much better their present magistrate was than a former one, said, "Ah! the banyan of our country is now giving the fruit of the palmirah."*c*

parable of thistle and cedar

a Keil.

b "The superior energy of Joash surprised him ere he had completed his military preparations." — *Jamieson.*

c Roberts.

13—16. (13) **brake down,** comp. fig. of wild beast, *v.* 9. (14) **all the gold,** *etc.*, all left fr. prev. spoliation for Hazael, ch. xii. 18. **hostages,** "sons of surety:"*a* pledges that Amaziah would not renew hostilities. (15, 16) **rest,** *etc.*, these *vv.* seem out of place here, interrupting the story of Amaziah.

The cost of war.—Men speak in glowing phrases of the triumphs of British arms in the last great war; but never let us forget the miseries which it entailed. If we look at the expenditure, we find that the war with France cost more than a thousand millions of money; and that, out of about fifty millions of annual taxation, only six millions are required for the civil government of the country, including the maintenance of the dignity of the crown, the whole of the rest being consumed by our war establishments, and the interest of the war debt. Contrasting what war has cost during the fifty years ending in 1850, with the money expended in missionary operations, we find that the

death and burial of Jehoash

a Gesenius.

"The tree of peace strikes its roots into the crevices of the everlasting Rock; it grows securely from that Rock, and casts out its cool shadow in the sunshine, and makes sweet music in the storm, and is to the believer as the shadow of a

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great rock and fruit of refreshment in a weary and parched land."—*Dr. Cumming.*

b Newman Hall.

death and burial of Amaziah

a "The combination of relentless animosity against the living prince with the deepest respect for his dead remains is very characteristic of an Oriental people." — *Spk. Com.*

b 2 Chr. xxvi. 1—13; 2 Ki. xv. 13, 32, 34; Is. i. 1, vi. 1.

"The sense of death is most in apprehension."—*Shakespeare.*

c Young.

death and burial of Jeroboam

v. 28. *Dr. E. Hawkins, Gen. Design of Old T. Hist. Disc.* 1.

"If a man were to fight with a dragon, his best way to deal with him is to pull out his venomous sting. The dragon which every Christian man has to encounter is Death, whose sting is sin: therefore, that we may not be foiled by Death, we are all our life to labour to deprive him of this sting." — *Cawdray.*

incomes, during that period, of the Bible Society, the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the London, the Baptist, the Wesleyan, the Church of England, the Moravian, the Home, the Colonial, the Irish Evangelical, and the City of London Missionary Societies, amounted altogether to fourteen and a half millions, for saving the lives and souls of men; while, during the same period, no less than twelve hundred millions were spent in destroying life and property by fire and sword in war.[b]

17—22. (17) **lived,** comp. 2 Chr. xxv. 27. (18) **written,** 2 Chr. xxv. (19) **Lachish,** Jos. x. 28, 32, 35. (20) **on horses,** *i.e.* in chariot drawn by the king's horses.[a] (21) **Azariah,** also called *Uzziah.*[b] (22) **Elath,** rebuilt or fortified it, *see* 1 Ki. ix. 26.

The Christian's death.—

The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven.
Fly, ye profane! if not, draw near with awe,
Receive the blessing, and adore the chance
That threw in this Bethesda your disease:
If unrestored by this, despair your cure,
For here resistless demonstration dwells:
A death-bed's a detector of the heart.
Here tired Dissimulation drops her mask
Through life's grimace, that mistress of the scene!
Here real and apparent are the same.
You see the man, you see his hold on heaven,
If sound his virtue; as Philander's, sound.
Heaven waits not the last moment; owns her friends
On this side death, and points them out to men;
A lecture silent, but of sovereign power!
To vice confusion, and to virtue peace.[c]

23—29. (23) **Jeroboam,** ch. xiii. 13. (24) **evil,** the usual formula. (25) **Hamath,** Nu. xxxiv. 8. **sea of the plain,** the Dead Sea. **Jonah,** Jon. i. 1. **Gath-hepher,** prob. same as Jos. xix. 13, now *Meshed.* **shut up,** *etc.,* 1 Ki. xiv. 10. (27) **blot out,** still a time of mercy remained for them. (28) **recovered Damascus,** prob. recovered fr. Damascus, or the Syr. king ruling at Damascus. (29) **Zachariah,** *whom Jehovah remembers.*

God with us in death.—It is true that no earthly friend can accompany us through the swellings of Jordan. There is no human arm on which we can stay as we walk through the dark valley. But though we may then be alone in one sense, yet we need not in another: the Saviour has promised to accompany us. He says, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Surely, then, we may sing with David, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." See that child who has to go through a dark plantation at the dead hour of night. Does he fear? No. Why? Simply because his father's hand is locked in his. The presence of his father dismisses his fears. So, when we are in the hands of our heavenly Father, we need not fear. He who holds up worlds can surely

protect us, and He has pledged Himself to do so if we fully trust ourselves to Him.[a]

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a Whitson.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

B.C 810.

1—7. (1) **twenty and seventh year**, comp. ch. xiv. 2, 17, 23. (2) **Jecholiah**, *able through Jehovah.* (3) **right**, comp. 2 Chr. xxvi. 4, 5. (4) **high places**, 1 Ki. iii. 2.[a] (5) **a leper**, for reason *see* 2 Chr. xxvi. 16—21. **several house**, separate house; "house of retirement;" lit. *in a house of relief.* (6) **rest**, *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxvi. (7) **buried**, *etc.*, not in tombs of kings, 2 Chr. xxvi. 23.

Azariah

a 1 Ki. xv. 14, xxii. 43; 2 Ki. xii. 3, xiv. 4.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

Assumed and real piety.—There is nothing more easy than to say divinity by rote, and to discourse of spiritual matters from the tongue or pen of others; but to hear God speak it to the soul, and to feel the power of religion in ourselves, and to express it out of the truth of experience within, is both rare and hard. All that we feel not in the matters of God is but hypocrisy; and, therefore, the more we profess, the more we sin. It will never be well with me till, in these greatest things, I be careless of others' censures, fearful only of God's and my own; till sound experience have really catechised my heart, and made me know God and my Saviour otherwise than by words. I will never be quiet till I can see, and feel, and taste my God: my hearing I will account as only serving to effect this, and my speech only to express it.[b]

"Peace with God implies reconciliation, pardon, adoption, and protection. And how can we be at peace with ourselves, till we have reason to believe that God is at peace with us?" — *Stillingfleet.*

b Bp. Hall.

8—12. (8) **did Zachariah**, *etc.*, poss. an interregnum bet. Jeroboam and Zachariah.[a] (9) **evil**, the usual formula. (10) **before the people**, openly, not by a secret conspiracy. (11), **rest**, *etc.*, usual formula. (12) **the word**, as 2 Ki. x. 30.

Zacariah

a Winer. Keil.

The pleasure and punishment of sin.—The pleasures of sin say unto us as Jael said to Sisera, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me, fear not; and if we ask water, they will give us milk, and bring butter in a lordly dish; but when we are turned in, they (as she did Sisera) cover us with a mantle, and finding us (by their lullings) to fall asleep, they put their hand to the nails, and their right hand to the workman's hammer, and with this hammer they smite us, piercing and striking through our temples; at their feet we bow, we fall; where we bow, there we fall down dead (Judges iv. 18, 19, v. 25, 26, 27). Their lips indeed drop like the honeycomb, and their mouth is smoother than oil; but their end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold on hell (Prov. v. 3—5). With much fair speech they cause us to yield, with the flattering of their lips they force us, and little think we, that we go as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the stocks, till a dart strike through our liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life (Prov. vii. 21—23).[b]

"The best foundation of peace of mind is the testimony of conscience: a sense not of perfect innocence, and of the merit of works, which would be vanity, arrogance, and a folly; but a sense of having lived before God in sincerity and without hypocrisy, — without wilful, deliberate, presumptuous, and continual disobedience." — *Archdeacon Jortin.*

b Venning.

13—15. (13) **Shallum**, *retribution.* **full month**, lit. *month of days;* i.e. a month with all its days complete. (14) **Menahem**, *consoler.* Commander of the forces.[a] He seems to have undertaken to avenge the murder of Zachariah; but he did not place on the throne the heir of Jehu. **Tirzah**, the residence of the kings of Israel before their removal to Samaria;[b] site uncer-

Shallum

a Josephus.

b 1 Ki. xiv. 17, xv. 21, xvi. 8.

"In one dom-

B.C. *cir.* 810.

gogue there are hidden ten tyrants."—*Luther.*

"A succession of rulers, who attain to the throne by conspiracy, revolt, perjury, and murder, is the surest sign, not only that there is something rotten in the state, but also that there is nothing sound in the nation, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head."—*Bähr.*

c Lockman.

Menahem

a Ewald.
b Spk. Com., Wordsworth, etc.
c Am. i. 13; Hos. xiii. 16.
d Prob. Pul was invited in the first instance, either by Menahem, or by some rival party in Israel.
"This is the first notice we have of kings of Assyr. in connection with the history of Israel and Judah." — *Wordsworth.*
"Pul visited the country in person, to offer his powerful support to the king, in his attempt to restore internal tranquillity." — *Ewald.*
v. 17. "In this one year there were born kings in Israel, one after another, and those direful threatenings of Amos vii. 9 began to be fulfilled."—*Trapp.*
e Bähr.
f Trapp.

Pekahiah

a Kitto.
b Is. vii. 4, 5, 9, viii. 6.

tain: prob. *Tellûzah*, 9 m. N. of Samaria. (15) **conspiracy, as** *v.* 10.

National demoralisation.—I. The corruption of Israel extended, in the first place, from the head downwards, Jeroboam made Israel to sin. II. Then, however, it came from below upwards. The rebels and murderers who came to the throne came from the people. Learn:—Watch the character of rulers, or the conduct of the people may involve the nation in moral ruin.

A code of morals.—My son, I wish thee to observe these six maxims, which comprehend all the morality of the ancients and moderns:—1. Have no attachment to the world but in proportion to the short duration of thy life. 2. Serve God with all that fervour which the need thou hast of Him demands. 3. Labour for the other life that awaits thee, and consider the time it must endure. 4. Strive to escape that fire out of which those who are once cast in can never escape. 5. If thou hast temerity enough to sin, measure beforehand the strength thou shalt require to endure the fire of hell and the chastisements of God. 6. When thou wishest to transgress, seek for a place where God cannot see thee.[c]

16—22. (16) **Tiphsah,** either a town near Tirzah;[a] or *Thapsacus,* on the Euphrates, the Tiphsah of Solomon.[b] (1 Ki. iv. 24.) **coasts,** districts round the city. **from Tirzah,** *i.e.* his expedition started out fr. this place. **women,** *etc.*, indicating the dreadful cruelty of his nature.[c] (17) **Azariah,** 2 Chr. xxii. 6. (18) **all his days,** in his case there was not even a partial or temporary repentance. (19) **Pul,** or *Phul,* prob. king of a second monarchy on the Euphrates. His name is not among Assy. monumental kings.[d] (20) **exacted,** demanded as a tax. (21) **rest,** *etc.*, Assyr. inscrip. tell of his later subjection by Tiglath-Pileser. (22) **Pekahiah,** only son, who at this period of the history succeeded his father.

Homiletic hints.—I. In the eyes of a domineering man there is no greater crime than that any one should refuse obedience to his will. II. Love of command is the vice which makes a man inhuman, and more cruel than a wild animal. III. Menahem, instead of turning to God as his protector and helper (Ps. cxi. 1, 2), seeks help from the enemies of Israel. He brings this help with money forced from his subjects, but thereby prepares the ruin of his kingdom and people. IV. Friendship bought with money will not last.[e]

Pul, king of Assyria (*v.* 19).—By other writers he is called Belosus, and Phul-Belosus: who, together with Arbaces, the Mede, besieged Sardanapalus, the last monarch of Assyria, who desperately burned himself in his own palace, and left his empire to this Pul, the first Babylonian monarch, and Arbaces, who made himself king of the Medes and Persians. Some hold that this Pul was that king of Nineveh which repented at the preaching of the prophet Jonah; and that here also the men of Nineveh rose in judgment against that nation. God stirring up a penitent Ethnic to take vengeance on impenitent Israel.[f]

23—26. (23) **two years,** the brief periods of the reigns indicate the disorder of the times. (24) **evil,** comp. *v.* 18. (25) **Pekah,** chief captain of the war chariots.[a] Prob. a man of low birth, therefore called by Isaiah, "Remaliah's son."[b] **palace,**

either the tower, or the harem ;[c] to this he had fled for safety. **Argob and Arieh,** most prob. his officers who were killed with him ; some, however, think they were the companions of Pekah. **Gileadites,**[d] these formed part of the body-guard.

An unfaithful prince has unfaithful servants (*v.* 25).—I. Pekahiah did evil in the sight of the Lord. Such a man would not regard honour in his servants. Bad men would be promoted. II. As Pekahiah turned against God, so Pekah turned against him. The principle herein applies to masters and servants, and the compacts generally of social life.

Deficient morality.—The man who tries to cut himself and square his conduct merely by the outward pattern of morality is as the artist who, instead of studying his art from the boundless and glorious pictures God has painted on the earth and in the sky, goes into some dim gallery, and pores over what hangs there, until he can badly imitate the stiff drapery, uncouth figures, inhuman adults, and monstrous pumpkin-headed children that the canvas before him exhibits. Ha ! you love to laugh at the artists : but what do you think the angels do at you, who prostitute not merely your fingers and imaginations, but your whole spiritual nature, to the work of making, not bad pictures, but bad, incomplete, poverty-stricken men ? "Is not morality good, as far as it goes ?" say you. "Yes, certainly, as far as it goes." "Isn't my cable as good as yours, as far as it goes ?" says the sailor who has a short cable to him who has one very long. "Yes," says the other, "as far as it goes ; but what of that, when it won't go within fifty fathoms of bottom ?" And of what use, O moralist ! is your cable, when it will not go within fathoms of the place where it can take hold upon the soul's anchorage ?[e]

27—31. (27) **Azariah,** 2 Chr. xxii. 6. (28) **evil,** as *vv.* 18. 24. (29) **Tiglath-pileser,**[a] poss. meaning *Lord of Tigris.*[b] As his genealogy is nowhere given, he is supposed to have been a usurper. His capital was Nineveh. **Ijon,** or Ayun. in Naphtali, N.W. of Dan. **Abel,** 1 Ki. xv. 20. **Janoah,** now *Yanoah*, 12 m. N.E. of Acre,[c] **Kedesh,** west of Lake Huleh.[d] **Hazor,** Jos. xi. 1. **Gilead,** LXX. have *Galaam*, and prob. a district E. of the lake is meant. (30) **Hoshea,** one of Pekah's friends.[e] **Uzziah,** or Azariah. The numbers given of the years of reigns cannot be harmonised. (31) **all . . did,** Is. vii., viii.

Danger of the mere moralist.—George Whitefield stopped for several days at the house of a general, at Providence, R.I. The general, his wife, his son, and three daughters, were serious, but not decidedly religious. Whitefield departed from his usual custom, which was to address the residents in the house where he stayed, individually, concerning the welfare of their souls. The last evening came, and the last night he was to spend there. He retired to rest ; but the Spirit of God came to him in the night, saying, "O man of God ! if these people perish, their blood be on thy head." He listened ; but the flesh said, "Do not speak to these people : they are so good and so kind, that you could not say a harsh thing to them." He rose and prayed. The sweat ran down his brow. He was in fear and anxiety. At last a happy thought struck him. He took his diamond ring from his finger, went up to the window, and wrote these words upon the glass : "One thing thou lackest." He could not summon courage to

B.C. *cir.* 810.

c Ewald.

d "Pekah came prob. fr. Gilead, fr. wh. country 50 desperate warriors had conspired with him to destroy the previous king." – *Ewald.*

"Princes ought not to trust too implicitly to their servants—those whose duty it is to protect them may be the first to strike them.' – *Osiander.*

"Morality without religion is only a kind of dead-reckoning,—an endeavour to find our place on a cloudy sea by measuring the distance we have to run, but without any observation of the heavenly bodies." — *Longfellow.*

e Beecher.

Pekah

a The Assyrian canon fixes his reign fr. B.C. 745 to B.C. 727.

b Wordsworth.

c "I reached Yanoah in about an hour fr. *Tarshiha*, and as this name occurs among the cities wh. Tiglath conquered, I was gratified to find in and about it evidences of extreme antiquity." —*Thomson.*

d Jos. xii. 22, xix. 37.

e Josephus.

"Tyrants generally rise very high that they may fall only so much the further" – *Osiander.*

"Morality does not make a Christian; yet

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no man can be a Christian without it." — *Bishop Wilson.*

say a word to the inmates, but went his way. No sooner was he gone, than the general, who had a great veneration for him, went into the room he had occupied; and the first thing that struck his attention was the sentence upon the window: "One thing thou lackest." That was exactly his case. The Spirit of God blessed it to his heart.

Jotham

a Bertheau.

b 2 Chr. xxvii.

c 2 Chr. xxvi. 16—21.

d 2 Ki. xviii. 4, xxiii. 1—20; 2 Chr. xxxi. 1, xxxiv. 3—7.

e Ben Tabeal, Is. vii. 6.

"When God wishes to punish the sins of a nation, He is wont to remove pious princes by death before the judgment begins."—*Osiander.*

"We have here a distinct proof that neither the good conduct of a prince by itself, nor the good conduct of the people by itself, can make a nation happy. Prince and people must together serve the Lord, if the land is to prosper."—*Calw. Bibel.*

"Hope is brightest when it dawns from fears."—*Scott.*

f Beecher.

32—38. (32) **Jotham,** 2 Chr. xxvii. 1. (33) **Zadok,** the priest mentioned in 1 Chr. vi. 12.[a] (34) **according to all,** except usurping the priestly functions,[b] wh. had been Uzziah's sin.[c] (35) **high places,** at these the worship of Jehovah was carried on, but they became a snare, bec. the idolatrous worship took the same form. Under Hezekiah all were swept away.[d] **higher gate,** protection on the northern side, fr. wh. danger was now expected. (36) **book,** *etc.,* 2 Chr. xxvii. (37) **Rezin,** who prob. joined Pekah for strong resistance of Assyria. Part of their scheme was to secure the aid of Judæa in the S. by putting a creature[e] of their own on the throne. (38) **Ahaz,** *possessor.*

A good prince (*v.* 36).—Jotham was a good prince as to—**I.** matter. II. Manner. III. Motive. IV. End. (*Trapp.*)—*The acts of Jotham.*—I. The real glory of a king may be secured without foreign conquests or victorious wars. II. It is illustrated by the acts of Jotham. 1. Beginning to reign young, he proceeded with the thoughtfulness of age; 2. He imitated the example of his father, and manifested the influence of his mother; 3. His attention to religion shows his wise estimate of the influence of Divine worship on the manners and prosperity of the people.

A fable for the moralist.—A barren and a fruitful vine are growing side by side in the garden; and the barren vine says to the fruitful one, "Is not my root as good as yours?" "Yes," replies the vine, "as good as mine." "And are not my lower leaves as broad and spreading? and is not my stem as large, and my bark as shaggy?" "Yes," says the vine. "And are not my leaves as green? and have I not as many bugs creeping up and down? and am I not taller than you?" "Yes," meekly replies the vine," but I have blossoms." "Oh! blossoms are of no use." "But I bear fruit." "What, those clusters? Those are only a trouble to a vine." But what thinks the vintner? He passes by the barren vine: but the other, filling the air with its odour in spring, and drooping with purple clusters in autumn, is his pride and joy; and he lingers near it, and prunes it, that it may become yet more luxuriant and fruitful. So the moralist and the Christian.[f]

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

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Ahaz

a 2 Chr. xxviii. 24.

b "He adopted the Moloch worship of the Ammonites and Moabites, and sacrificed at least one son, prob. his first-born, according to the horrid

1—4. (1) **Ahaz,** *etc.,* comp. 2 Chr. xxviii. 1. (2) **did not right,**[a] the wealth of the two prev. reigns led to religious and moral degeneracy. (3) **way of the kings,** in his early reign adopting the Israelite *symbolic* worship by images, but in his later reign falling into actual idolatry. **son . . fire,**[b] comp. 2 Chr. xxviii. 3. Prob. this done by Ahaz in a season of great distress and despair.[c] **Lord cast out,** indic. that it was the Canaanite type of idolatry that Ahaz chose, not the Phœnician or Assyrian. (4) **he sacrificed,** actually setting the bad example.

King Ahaz.—I. The way in which he walked (*vv.* 1—4)—an

apostate. II. The distress into which he came (*vv.* 5, 6). Land devastated. Elath cut off. Throne in danger. He trembled like trees in a wind (Is. vii. 2). III The help which he sought (*vv.* 7—9). 1. Not from God; but—2. From Assyria (Ps. cxxiv. 8; Jer. xvii. 5—7). Instead of seeking it with prayer and supplication, he seeks it with silver and gold.

Passing through the fire (*v.* 3).—Waiving further allusion to that account at present, we think the following extract may afford a good idea in what manner the passing through or over fire was anciently performed: the attentive reader will notice the particulars. "A still more astonishing instance of the superstition of the ancient Indians, in respect to the venerated fire, remains at this day in the grand annual festival holden in honour of Darma Rajah, and called the feast of fire; in which, as in the ancient rites of Moloch, the devotees walk barefoot over a glowing fire, extending forty feet. It is called the feast of fire, because they then walk on that element. It lasts eighteen days, during which time those that make a vow to keep it must fast, abstain from women, lie on the bare ground, and walk on a brisk fire. The eighteenth day they assemble, on the sound of instruments; their heads crowned with flowers, the body bedaubed with saffron, and follow in cadence the figures of Darma Rajah, and Drobede, his wife, who are carried there in procession; when they come to the fire, they stir it, to animate its activity, and take a little of the ashes, with which they rub their forehead, and when the gods have been three times round it, they walk either fast or slow, according to their zeal, over a very hot fire, extending to about forty feet in length. Some carry their children in their arms, and others lances, sabres, and standards. The most fervent devotees walk several times over the fire. After the ceremony, the people press to collect some of the ashes to rub their foreheads with, and obtain from the devotees some of the flowers with which they were adorned, and which they carefully preserve."[d] The flowers, then, were not burned.

5—9. (5) **then**, immediately on the accession of Ahaz.[a] **could not overcome**, bec. the defences of Jerus. were so strong. The Jews were beaten in the open field, but were protected by the situation and walls of their city. (6) **Elath**, ch. xiv. 22, prob. Syria here should be *Edom*, to wh. Elath belonged. **Syrians**, better *Edomites*.[b] (7) **messengers**, inviting his aid against Syria and Israel. He should have sought the help of Jehovah.[c] (8) **took**, *etc.*, "political necessity was always held to justify the devotion of the temple treasure to secular purposes."[d] **present**, to gain favour, not as tribute. (9) **Damascus**, Rezin's capital. **captive to Kir**, Am. ix. 7, south-eastern limits of Assyria.[e]

The servitude of Ahaz (*v.* 7).—I. Ahaz refused to be the servant of God. II. God withdrew His favour. III. Ahaz becomes the servant of men. Learn:—1. The service of God secures the highest freedom; 2. Proud independence towards God ends in subjection to men.

The star of Providence.—

There is a light in yonder skies—
A light unseen by outward eyes;
But clear and bright to inward sense,
It shines, the star of Providence.

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rites of those nations." — *Spk. Com.*

Comp. 2 Ki. iii. 27, xxi. 6; Mi. vi. 7; Le. xviii. 21; De. xviii. 10.

c Wordsworth.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont., Ahaz with his New Altar.*

"Ahaz. — Under this most wicked prince prophesied Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, and Nahum, but with little good success, so incorrigibly flagitious were now all sorts grown." —*Trapp.*

"All sects are different, because they come from men; morality is everywhere the same, because it comes from God." — *Voltaire.*

d Sonnerat's Travels.

war with Pekah and Rezin

a Comp. 2 Chr. xxviii. 5—10.

b Marg. reads *Edomim*, not *Aromim.*

So LXX., Vulg., *Robinson, Bertheau, Spk. Com.*, etc.

c Ps. cxlvi. 3; Je. xvii. 5; Is vii. 17.

d 1 Ki. xv. 18; 2 Ki. xii. 18.

e "Tiglath seems to have desired not only the plunder of the country, but the *persons* of the people, to be sent for the replenishment of his own land, not peopled in

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proportion to its extent, and thinned by losses in his wars"—*Kitto.*
"Kir was near the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates."—*Rawlinson.*
"A politician must like lightning melt the very marrow, and not taint the skin; his ways must not be seen."—*Chapman.*

f Madame Guyon.

The radiance of the central throne,
It comes from God and God alone;
The ray that never yet grew pale,
The star "that shines within the veil."
And faith, uncheck'd by earthly fears,
Shall lift its eye, though fill'd with tears;
And while around 'tis dark as night,
Untired shall mark that heavenly light.
In vain they smite me;—men but do
What God permits with different view;
To outward sight they wield the rod,
But faith proclaims it all of God.
Unmoved, then, let me keep my way,
Supported by that cheering ray
Which, shining distant, renders clear
The clouds and darkness thronging near.*f*

the altar of Ahaz

a "Among the tributes brought to Tiglath at this time, those of Judæa, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Gaza, Ascalon, Tyre, and Arvad (Aradus) are mentioned."—*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Ki. iii. 4; 2 Chr. i. 3—6.

c Urijah had placed the new altar in a line with the old, but away fr. it, between it and the eastern gate. Ahaz made it take the place and work of the old.

d Keil, Gesenius, etc.

e Venning.
"We are surrounded by motives to piety and devotion, if we would but mind them. The poor are designed to excite our liberality; the miserable, our pity; the sick, our assistance; the ignorant, our instruction; those that are fallen, our helping hand. In those who are vain, we see the vanity of the world; in those who are wicked, our own frailty.

10—16. (10) **to meet,** as act of respect; it seems to have involved his being recognised as a tributary king.*a* **an altar,** the altar, poss. the Assyrian altar, wh. he imitates to curry favour. Assyr. altars were small, and kings took them with them on expeditions. **Urijah,** Is. viii. 2. **fashion,** design. **pattern,** of its ornamentation. (11) **built,** *etc.*, an act of unfaithful yielding. (12) **offered,** this kings sometimes did.*b* (13) **upon the altar,** his own, not God's. (14) **brazen altar,** 2 Chr. iv. 1. **forefront,** immediately facing the porch.*c* (15) **enquire by,** should read, "for me to consider what I shall do with it."*d* (16) **thus,** as *v.* 15.

The sacrilege upon the house of God.—I. The king's self-willed assault on established institutions. II. The high priest's concessions. See in this a clear picture of the lack of Christian spirit in the two highest ranks. The State desires to see everything arranged according to its whims: the Church yields for the sake of temporal advantage.

Sinister motives in religion.—Of how many may it be said, as of Tacitus of Galba, no man fitter to be an emperor, if he had not been an emperor! How many have been good commonwealth's men, gallant patriots, till they came to be statesmen! As if men minded goodness only to make them great, and then bid it farewell, as he that always had a fishing-net spread on his table till he got a bishopric, and then caused it to be laid aside, saying he had what he fished for.*e*—*Reward of motives.*—A poor Arab travelling in the desert met with a spring of sweet water. Accustomed as he was to brackish wells, to his simple mind it appeared that such water as this was worthy of a monarch, and, filling his leathern bottle from the spring, he determined to go and present it to the caliph himself. He travelled a considerable distance before he reached the presence of his sovereign, and laid his humble offering at his feet. The caliph did not despise the little gift brought to him with so much trouble. He ordered some of the water to be poured into a cup, drank it, and, thanking the Arab with a smile, ordered him to be presented with a reward. The courtiers around pressed forward, eager to taste of the wonderful water: but, to the surprise of all, the caliph forbade them to touch a single drop. After the poor Arab had departed, the caliph thus explained the motives of his conduct: "During the travels of the Arab, the water in this leathern bottle had become

impure and distasteful; but it was an offering of love, and, as such, I have received it with pleasure. But I well knew that, had I suffered another to partake of it, he would not have concealed his disgust; and therefore I forbade you to touch the draught, lest the heart of the poor man should have been wounded."

17—20. (17) **cut .. bases,** this refers to the 10 lavers made by Solomon;[a] Ahaz intended to use the material of these for his idolatrous constructions. **the sea,** *etc.*, great molten sea;[b] these seem to have been little used thro' the neglect of Jehovah's worship. (18) **covert,** portico through which the priests entered the temple on the Sabbath.[c] **king's entry,** a private external entrance for the king. **for the king,**[d] or for the sake of, to please the king, by showing the adoption of his religion. (19) **rest,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxviii., xxix. (29) **with his fathers,** not however in the sepulchres of the kings.[e]

The standard of true religion.—All religion must be Scripture religion; all worship, Scripture worship; all zeal, Scripture zeal: so that, let a man have never such sublime knowledge, and such burning zeal, yet, if it be not according to the law and the testimony, there is no light in him. To say, "It's upon my conscience: it's upon my spirit; I find much comfort and much sweetness in religion"—all this is nothing; for all false religions can and do say this But hast thou the Word of God to warrant thee? Doth that justify thee? All things else are but an empty shadow.[f]

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When we see good men rewarded, it confirms our hope; and when evil men are punished, it excites our fear."—*Bishop Wilson.*

death of Ahaz

a 1 Ki. vii. 27—39.

b 1 Ki. vii. 23—26.

c Jamieson.

d "Removed **he** into the house of the Lord from fear of the king of Assyria."—*Keil.*

e 2 Chr. xxviii. 27. "It is shameful to introduce changes in religious matters for political reasons."

f Burgess.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

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1—5. (1) **twelfth year,** comp. ch. xv. 30. There must have been eight years of anarchy between Pekah and Hoshea. It was the twelfth year of Ahaz before Hoshea's throne was secure. (2) **not as,** he allowed liberty in worship of Jehovah.[a] (3) **Shalmaneser,** successor of *Tiglath.* Some think same as Shalman.[b] predecessor of Sargon. **presents,** marg. rendered him tribute. (4) **conspiracy,** a plot to secure the help of Egypt against Assyria. **So,**[c] the Sabaco of Herodotus. The name should be *Seveh.*[d] **no present,** withheld the wonted tribute. (5) **throughout all,** devastating all the open country.

Hoshea

a 2 Chr. xxx. 1—11.

b Hos. x. 14.

c "A famous Ethiopian who, for 50 years, occupied the Egyptian throne."—*Jamieson.*

d Ewald.

"We know little of him fr. Assyr. sources, since his records have been mutilated by his successors, the Sargonids, who were of a wholly different family."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 1—6. *Dr. Collyer, Scrip. Facts,* 443.

Avoiding evil.—"I have orders, positive orders, not to go there—orders that I dare not disobey," said a youth who was being tempted to a smoking and gambling saloon. "Come! don't be so womanish: come along, like a man!" shouted the youths. "No; I can't break orders." said John. "What special orders have you got? Come, show them to us if you can. Show us the orders." John took a neat little book from his pocket and read aloud: "'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away!' Now," said John, "you see my orders forbid my going with you. They are God's orders; and by His help I mean to keep them."—*Benefits of temptation.*—When thou art tempted or troubled, think upon the remedy that our Saviour saith in His Gospel, "Watch ye and pray ye, that ye enter not

"Satan tempts some persons more than

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into temptation." He saith not, Pray ye that ye be not tempted; for it is good and profitable to good men to be tempted and troubled, as is shown by what the prophet saith. To him that is tempted and troubled God saith, "I am with him in tribulation; I shall deliver him, and shall glorify him." Let no man think himself to be holy because he is not tempted, for the holiest and highest in life have the most temptations. How much the higher a hill is, so much is the wind there greater; so, how much higher the life is, so much stronger is the temptation of the enemy. God playeth with His child when He suffereth him to be tempted, as a mother rises from her much beloved child, and hides herself, and leaves him alone, and suffers him to cry, Mother, mother, so that he looks about, cries and weeps for a time, and at last, when the child is ready to be overset with troubles and weeping, she comes again, clasps him in her arms, and kisses him, and wipes away the tears. So our Lord suffereth His beloved child to be tempted and troubled for a time, and withdraweth some of His solace and full protection, to see what His child will do; and when he is about to be overcome by temptations, then He defendeth him, and comforteth him with His grace. And therefore, when we are tempted, let us cry for the help of our Father, as a child cries after the comfort of its mother. For whoso prayeth devoutly shall have help oft to pray; and it shall profit much to establish the heart in God, and suffer it not to bow about, now into this, and now into that. The fiend is overcome by busy and devout prayer, and becomes feeble and without strength to them that are strong and persevering in devout prayer. Devout prayer of a holy soul is as sweet incense which driveth away all evil savours, and enters up by odour of sweetness into the presence of God.[e]

others; some are like wet tinder, who will not so soon take the fire of temptation as others. Satan tempts most when he thinks his policies will more easily prevail; some are fitter to receive the impression of temptation, as soft wax is fitter to receive the impression of the seal. The apostle speaks of 'vessels fitted for destruction;' so there are vessels fitted for temptation. Some, like the sponge, suck in Satan's temptations."—*T. Watson.*

e Wickliffe.

"True hope is swift, and flies with swallows' wings."—*Shakespeare.*

idolatry of Israel

6—12. (6) **the king of Assyria,** not Shalmaneser, but Sargon, his successor.[a] **Halah,** same as Calah, Ge. x. 11, 12. The Chalcitis of Ptolemy, N. of Nineveh. **Habor,** name of chief river of Gozan,[b] the western Khabour, the great effluent of the Euphrates. (7) **feared,** with fear that led to worshipping. (8) **walked,** arranged their conduct. **heathen,** Canaanite, whose idolatries were Phœnician. (9) **secretly,** cloaking their idolatries by keeping up the external service of Jehovah. (10) **images,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xiv. 23. (11) **burnt incense,** a characteristic heathen rite.[c] (12) **idols,** vanities, false deities.

The gods many of heathendom.—Thus did the wicked Jews imitate the heathen. The whole verse might be a description of the localities and usages of modern heathenism. See their high hills; they are all famous for being the habitation of some deity. On the summit there is generally a rude representation, formed by nature, or the distorted imagination, into the likeness of a god. In going to the spot, images are set up in every direction, as so many sentinels and guides to the sacred arcana. See the *Ficus religiosa*, and numerous other trees, under which various symbols of idolatry may be seen. Fastened into the roots of one, we discover the trident of Siva; under another, an emblem of Ganesa: there we see a few faded flowers, a broken cocoa-nut, an altar, or the ashes of a recent fire.[d]

a Sargon may have been generalissimo of the forces, and Shalmaneser may have died in the course of the siege.

b 2 Ki. xviii. 11, xix. 12; 1 Chr. v. 26.

c For prophetic reproaches for this see Is. lxv. 3, 7; Hos. ii. 13, iv. 13, xi. 29.

e. 7. L. Sterne, vi. 177.

d Roberts.

the Lord's testimony

13—18. (13) **testified,** with gracious warnings.[e] **against Judah,** wh., though not so far gone in idolatry, had yet

perilously yielded to temptation. **seers,** Heb. *chôzeh*, distinct fr. *nabi*, the prophets.[b] (14) **hardened,** *etc.*, De. x. 16.[c] (15) **vanity,**[d] all idols were so regarded, 1 Cor. viii. 4. **charged them,** as Ex. xxiii. 24, etc. (16) **molten . . calves,** Ex. xxxii. 8; 1 Ki. xii. 28. **grove,**[e] lit. *Asherah*. **host,** *etc.*, star-worship would naturally be associated with that of *Baal*, the sun, and *Ashtoreth*, the earth. (17) **thro' the fire,** ch. xvi. 3. **divination,** De. xviii. 10, 11. (18) **angry,** judicial wrath is indicated.

The childless chief.—On one occasion, at Raiatea, one of the Society Islands, six hundred children were assembled. A feast was prepared for them; they marched through the settlement in procession, dressed in European garments, with little hats and bonnets, made by those very parents who would have destroyed them had not the Gospel come to their rescue. They and their parents occupied the chapel. The appearance of the parents was most affecting. The eyes of some were beaming with delight, as the father said to the mother, "What a mercy it is we spared our dear girl." Bitter tears rolling down the saddened countenances of others, told the painful tale that all their children were destroyed. A venerable chief, grey with age, could bear the scene no longer; he arose, and with an impassioned look and manner exclaimed, "Let me speak; I must speak. Oh! that I had known that the Gospel was coming, my children would have been among this happy group; but, alas! I destroyed them all. I have not one left. I shall die childless, though I have been the father of nineteen children." Sitting down, he gave vent to his agonised feelings in a flood of tears.[f]

19—23. (19) **Judah,** comprising the section that clung to the house of David. (20) **all the seed,** both of Israel, and of Judah. **spoilers,** such as Tiglath, Sennacherib, Esar-Haddon, and Nebuchadnezzar.[a] **his sight,** fig. of Jehovah as King of the land of Canaan, and dwelling in it. (21) **he rent,** as a judgment on the nation. **drove,** Jeroboam acted with great violence and wilfulness. (22) **walked in,** adopted the way that Jeroboam marked out. (23) **had said,** comp. *v.* 13.

The Assyrian conquests.—The progress of the Assyrian conquerors, as described by the sacred historians and the prophets, is remarkably corroborated by the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions, as deciphered by Colonel Rawlinson; and it is not by any means unlikely that further research may bring to light accounts of the expeditions of the Assyrian kings in Palestine. We copy some sentences in corroboration. The king, in the first instances, is called Temen-bar, and all the inscriptions make the kings speak in the first person. The inscription begins with an invocation which Rawlinson ingenuously confesses his inability to follow. He perceives, however, that first there is a list of gods; then the favour of all these deities, with Assarac at their head—the supreme god of heaven—is invoked for the protection of Assyria. The king then goes on to give his own titles and genealogy. He calls himself king of the nations who worship Husi and Assarac; king of Mesopotamia; son of Sardanapalus, the servant of Husi, the protector, who first introduced the worship of the gods among many peopled nations. Then the king proceeds to register the various military glories of his reign. "These campaigns," says Rawlinson, "are almost all described in the same terms; the king of Assyria defeats the

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against Israel and Judah

a Ps. lxxxi. 8, 9; Ne. ix. 28—30; Je. xviii. 11, xxv. 5, xxxv. 15, xlii. 19; Ho. iv. 15.

b "Haverniek conjectures that the term *nabi* was applied to the members of the prophetical order only, while *chôzeh* was applicable to all who received a prophetical revelation."—*Spk. Com.*

c Ex. xxxii. 9, xxxiii. 3—5, xxxiv. 9; De. ix. 6, 13, xxxi. 27.

d Heb. *hebel*, breath, or vapour.

e 1 Ki. xvi. 33.

vv. 13, 14. *F. Nolan, Warburton, Lec.* 1.

f Dr. Cheever.

the reason of the captivity of Israel

a 2 Ki xv. 19—29; 1 Chr. v. 26; 2 Ki. xviii. 13—16; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11.

vv. 18—23. *F. Nolan, Warburton, Lec.* 26 and 54.

"I have been much affected with the following reflection:—Though, if not greatly deceived, I have had some degree of experimental acquaintance with Jesus Christ for almost forty years; though I have borne the ministerial character for upwards of twenty-five years; though I have been perhaps of some little use in the Church of God;

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and though I have had a greater share of esteem among religious people than I had any reason to expect; yet, after all, it is possible for me, in a single hour of temptation, to blast my character—to ruin my public usefulness—and to render my warmest Christian friends ashamed of owning me."—*Booth.*

b Dr. Kitto.

Assyrian colonisation of Samaria

a Spk. Com.

b Wordsworth, Jamieson.

Kitto thinks this was done partly by Shalmaneser, and partly by Esar-Haddon.

c Gesenius.

d 2 Ki. xviii. 34, xix. 13.

e Ezr viii. 15.

f Ju. xiv. 5; 1 Sa. xvii. 34; 1 Ki. xiii. 24, xx. 36; Song. iv. 8.

g "It must not be supposed that the Israelites were universally removed to a man. A remnant was left, chiefly of the poorer and lower classes, with whom these foreign colonists mingled." — *Jamieson.*

h 1 Ki. xx. 23.

"Never was a man truly and inwardly humbled but God, in the riches of His special mercy, in Christ, truly pardoned him." — *Sanderson.*

enemy in the field, subjugates the country, sacrifices to the gods, and then generally carries off the inhabitants, with their most valuable effects, into captivity into Assyria; replacing the people with colonists drawn from the nations immediately subject to him, and appointing his own officers and prefects to the charge of the colonists, and the administration of the new territory." "In the third year, Ahuni, son of Hateni, rebelled against me. The country beyond the Euphrates he placed under the protection of the god Assarac the Excellent, while he committed to the god Rimmon the country between the Euphrates and the Arteri. . . Then I went out from the city of Nineveh, and, crossing the Euphrates, I attacked and defeated Ahuni, the son of Hateni, in the city of Sitrat, which was situated upon the Euphrates, and which Ahuni had made one of his capitals. The rest of the country I brought under subjection; and Ahuni, the son of Hateni, with his gods, and his chief priests, his horses, his sons, and his daughters, and all his men of war, I brought away to my country of Assyria." *b*

24—29. (24) **the king,** some think this was Sargon, the father of Sennacherib;*a* others think *Esar-haddon*, Sennacherib's son.*b* **Cuthah,** prob. a city some 15 m. N.E. of Babylon.*c* **Ava,** prob. *Icah*,*d* see also Ahava.*e* **Hamath,** 1 Ki. viii. 65. **Sepharvaim,** *Sipphara* of Ptolemy; *Tsiphar* on Assyr. inscriptions: mod. name Mosaib, on the Euphrates, above Babylon. (25) **lions,** these increased *f* by reason of the limited population.*g* (26) **manner,** *etc.*, deities were regarded as specially protecting particular countries.*h* (27) **one of the priests,** this therefore occurred soon after the deportation. (28) **taught,** *etc.*, he was probably a priest of Jeroboam's type of religion. (29) **gods,** besides this supposed god of the land.

The Samaritans (*v.* 29).—Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, destroyed the kingdom of Israel, and carried away the mass of the people into captivity. Some, however, were suffered to remain, that the ground might not become a complete desert; and these united and intermarried with colonists sent from various parts to supply the vacancies occasioned by the loss of the former inhabitants. Idolatry soon corrupted the whole people; but they retained with it the worship of the One living and true God. Cyrus afterwards permitted the Jews to return from captivity and rebuild the temple, when the Samaritans, so called, wished to unite in the labour, and share in their religious privileges. But Zerubbabel and the other Jewish rulers would not admit of so corrupt a mixture among their nation. The Samaritans then employed their most strenuous efforts to obstruct the rebuilding of the temple and the prosperity of the Jews. Hence originated a mutual hatred between the nations; they also at length, aided by Sanballat, their governor, obtained permission from Alexander the Great, and built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim (Ezra iv. 1—4; Neh. ii. 10—20). The two nations made this a subject of future contention, and each nation claimed superiority for its own place of worship. The rancorous hatred between them became at last so strong that to many of the Jews the Samaritans were objects of greater detestation than even the Gentiles (Luke x. 33). A poor remnant of this people is found at Nablous, the ancient Shechem; but they

exist in a state of very great poverty, and probably will soon be extinct.[i]

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i I. Cobbin, M.A.

30—35. (30) **Succoth-benoth,** Heb. *tents of daughters.*[a] Prob. name of a Bab. goddess called *Zirbanit.* **Nergal,** planet Mars,[b] god of war. **Ashima,** idol in form of entirely bald he-goat. (31) **Nibhaz,** the barker, god in form of dog. **Tartak,** prob. in form of ass.[c] **Adrammelech,** *etc.*, names for the sun. (32) **feared,** dreaded the vengeance of. **lowest,** 1 Ki. xii. 31. (33) **served,** *etc.*, with the devotion of heart and will. (34) **this day,** time of writing or compiling the Books of Kings. **fear not,** with fear that includes service. (35) **not fear,** Ju. vi. 10.

Babylonian idolatry

a "Supposed to be booths used for impure rites." — *Wordsworth*

Nu. xxv. 8; Am ii. 8.

b Winer, Rawlinson.

"Assyr. inscrip connect Nergal in a very special way with Cutha, of wh. he was evidently tutelary deity."—*Spk. Com.*

c These explan. come from the Rabbis, and may indicate Heb. scorn rather than the precise truth.

d Dr. Boyd.

"It was an ancient custom, when an heir was impleaded as an idiot, to put before him an apple or a counter, with a piece of gold, and try which he would take: if he took the apple or the counter, and not the gold, he was cast for a fool, as unable to discern the true worth of things. This is the way, however, with all wicked men, who prefer toys to treasure, trifles to realities, present troubles to eternal joys."—*Bowes.*

v. 33. *C. Simeon, M.A., Wks.* iii. 531; *A. Roberts, Vill. Ss.* ii. 224; *C. G. Finney, Lect.* 9; *J. H. Smith,* i. 52.

e Dr. Bonar.

f F. W. Robertson.

The inconsistent worship (*v.* 33).—In looking at the statement that the inhabitants of the Samaritan cities "feared the Lord and served their own gods," consider—I. The curious inconsistency of their conduct. II. The motive which led them to offer worship to the true God. Pure and simple fear. III. That the worship which they paid to the true God was not nearly so hearty and real a thing as that which they paid to their old idols. They "feared" the Lord, but "served" their own gods.[d]

The religion of the world.—The tendency of the world's religion just now is, to reject the blood and to glory in a Gospel which needs no sacrifice, no "Lamb slain." Thus they go "in the way of Cain" (Jude 11). Cain refused the blood, and came to God without it. He would not own himself a sinner condemned to die, and needing the death of another to save him. This was man's open rejection of God's own way of life. Foremost in this rejection of what is profanely called by some scoffers "the religion of the shambles," we see the first murderer; and he who would not defile his altar with the blood of a lamb pollutes the earth with his brother's blood.[e]—*Description of worldliness.*—Worldliness is the spirit of childhood carried into manhood. The child lives in the present hour: to-day to him is everything. The holiday promised at a distant interval is no holiday at all: it must be either now or never. Natural in the child, and therefore pardonable, this spirit, when carried on into manhood, of course is worldliness. The most distinct illustration given us of this is the case of Esau. Esau came from the hunting-field worn and hungry: the only means of procuring the tempting mess of his brother's pottage was the sacrifice of his father's blessing, which, in those ages, carried with it a substantial advantage. But that birthright could be enjoyed only after *years:* the *pottage* was *present*, near and certain: therefore he sacrificed a future and higher blessing for a present and lower pleasure. For this reason, Esau is the Bible type of worldliness: he is called in Scripture a profane, that is, not distinctly a vicious, but a secular or worldly person,—an overgrown child, impetuous, inconsistent; not without gleams of generosity and kindliness, but over-accustomed to immediate gratification.[f]

36—41. (36) **Lord,** read Jehovah. **stretched out arm,** Ex. vi. 6. (37) **he wrote,** Ex. xxxiv. 1. (38) **not forget,** De. iv. 23. (39) **fear,** with fear that unites with itself love, trust, and obedience. (40) **former manner,** yielding to the enticements of surrounding idolatry. (41) **graven images,** heathen idols having some material form and shape.[a]

God's testimony against idolatry

a "The Baby-

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Ionians appear to have made a very sparing use of animal forms among their religious emblems." — *Spk. Com.*

Ju. vi. 10.

b Roberts.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit." These words were written over the bed of St. Augustine, for his constant meditation.

Fear the effect of heathenism (*v.* 37).—The most prominent effect of heathenism on the minds of its votaries is fear: and no wonder, for how can they love deities guilty of such repeated acts of cruelty, injustice, falsehood, dishonesty, and impurity? Strange as it may appear, European descendants, as well as native Christians, are in danger of fearing the gods of the heathen. There are so many traditions of their malignity and power that it requires strength of mind, and, above all, faith in Jesus Christ, the conqueror of devils, to give a perfect victory over it. On this account the missionaries sent out by Denmark, more than one hundred years ago (and some of their successors), have not approved of the native Christians studying the heathen books and superstitions. This, however, has had an injurious effect, because it disqualified the members of the Church to expose the errors of heathenism to the people, and also conveyed an idea of something like inadequacy in the Gospel of Christ to meet such a system. In view of this, the missionaries of the present day, and many of their converts, have, like Ezekiel (chap. viii.), looked into this vile arcana; have dragged the monstrous transactions to light, exposed them to public gaze, and driven from the field of argument the proud and learned Brahmin.[b]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

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Hezekiah

a "His reign of 29 years exhibits an almost unclouded picture of persistent struggles against the most embarrassed and difficult circumstances, crowned with elevating victories."—*Ewald.*

b Is. viii. 2.

c Comp. 1 Ki. xv. 11; 2 Ki. xxii. 2; See also 2 Chr. xxviii., xxix.

d Spurgeon.

Examples of boldness. — Abraham (Gen. xviii. 22—32); Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 24—29); Moses (Ex. xxxii. 31, 32, xxxiii. 18); Aaron (Num. xvi. 47, 48); David (1 Sam. xvii. 45); Elijah (1 Ki. xviii. 15, 18); Nehemiah (Neh. vi. 11); Shadrach (Dan. iii.

1—3. (1) **Hezekiah,** whom Jehovah strengthens.[a] (2) **twenty and five,** by comp. ch. xvi. 2, it will appear that Hezekiah was born when his father was eleven years old. He might, however, have shared the throne with his father for some years. **Abi,** in 2 Chr. xxix. 1, *Abijah.* **Zachariah,**[b] prob. favourite proph. of Uzziah. (3) **right,**[c] the model of Dav. indic. that he did right things in a right spirit.

Ashamed of religion.—What would the queen think of her soldiers if they should swear they were loyal and true and were to say, "Your Majesty, we prefer not to wear these regimentals: let us wear the dress of civilians! We are right honest men and upright, but do not care to stand in your ranks, acknowledged as your soldiers: we had rather slink into the enemy's camp, and into your camps too, and not wear anything that would mark us as being your soldiers." Ah! some of you do the same with Christ. You are going to be secret Christians, are you, and slink into the devil's camp, and into Christ's camp, but acknowledged by none?[d]—*Boldness of St. Nilus.*—The virtues of St. Nilus Grotta Ferata secured him the respect of the people and the fear of the nobles. Pandolfo, Prince of Capua, left a widow, Aloare, who at this time governed in right of her two sons. She had instigated these youths to murder their cousin, a powerful and virtuous noble; and now, tortured by remorse, and fearful for the consequences to them, she sent for St. Nilus, confessed her crime, and entreated absolution. He refused to give it but upon condition that she should yield up one of her sons to the family of the murdered man, to be dealt with as they should think fit, as the only real expiation she could make. The guilty mother wept, and could not resolve on the sacrifice. Nilus then, with all the severity and dignity of a prophet, denounced her sin as unforgiven, and told her that the expiation she had refused of her

own free will would ere long be exacted from her. The princess, terrified, entreated him to intercede for her, and endeavoured to force upon him a sum of money. Nilus flung the gold upon the earth, and, turning from her, shut himself up in his cell. Shortly afterwards, the younger of the two princes assassinated his brother in a church; and for this sacrilegious fratricide he was himself put to death by order of Hugh Capet, King of France. Pope Gregory V. and the Emperor Otho III. sought his favour; but the old man rebuked them both as enemies of God. He wrote to the emperor a letter of reproach, concluding with these words, "Because ye have broken faith, and because ye have had no mercy for the vanquished, nor compassion for those who had no longer the power to injure or resist, know that God will avenge the cause of the oppressed, and ye shall both seek mercy, and shall not find it." Having despatched this letter, he shook the dust from his feet, and departed the same night from Rome. Within two years Pope Gregory died in some miserable manner; and Otho, terrified by remorse and the denunciations of St. Nilus, undertook a pilgrimage to Mont Galgano. On his return, he paid a visit to Nilus in his hermitage at Frascati, and, falling on his knees, besought the prayers and intercession of the saint. He offered to erect, instead of his poor oratory, a magnificent convent, with an endowment of lands. Nilus refused his gifts. The emperor, rising from his knees, entreated the holy man to ask some boon before they parted, promising that whatever it might be he would grant it. Nilus, stretching forth his hand, laid it on the jewelled cuirass of the emperor, and said with deep solemnity, "I ask of thee but this, that thou wouldst make reparation for thy crimes before God, and save thine own soul." Otho returned to Rome, where, within a few weeks afterwards, the people rose against him, obliged him to fly ignominiously; and he died at the early age of twenty-six, poisoned by the widow of Crescentius.[c]

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17, 18); Daniel (Dan. vi. 10); Joseph (Mark xv. 43); Peter and John (Acts iv. 8–13); Stephen (Acts vii. 51); Paul (Acts xi. 27, 29, xix. 8); Barnabas (Acts xiv. 3); Apollos (Acts xviii. 26).

Lady Jane Grey, three days before her execution, wrote: "I am prepared to receive patiently my death in any manner it will please the queen to appoint. True it is my flesh shuddlers, as is natural to frail mortality; but my spirit will spring rejoicingly into the eternal light, where I hope the mercy of God will receive it."

c Mrs. Jamieson.

4—8. (4) **removed** *etc.*,[a] details given in 2 Chr. xxix. 3, xxxi. 19. **images,** 1 Ki. xiv. 23. **brazen serpent,** Nu. xxi. 9. The worship of the serpent[b] was so universal in ancient times that we cannot wonder the Jews were enticed to it. **Nehushtan,** mere brass: a play on the word *nachash*, a serpent. (5) **after him,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xxiii. 25; treat this as a proverbial expression. (6) **clave,** was steadfast throughout life. (7) **went forth,** in all his goings. **rebelled,** refused to acknowl. Assyr. superiority, or pay tribute. (8) **Gaza,** Ge. x. 19; Jos. x. 41.

Nehushtan (*v.* 4).—I. The perverting tendency of sin. The brazen serpent was a special provision of goodness for a special evil. Here we find the Jews perverting this special display of goodness. Sin has ever been a perverting power. We see its power in both departments of life. 1. Secular: wealth in its place is a blessing; but it may become a god; 2. Spiritual: ministers in their places are blessings; theology in its place is a blessing; so with the sacraments and the Sabbath. But all may become evils: the brazen serpent may become a god. II. The true instincts of a reformer. He displays, like Hezekiah—1. Insight: Hezekiah saw what the people did not see: where his age saw a god he saw nothing more than a piece of brass—Nehushtan; 2. Honesty: Hezekiah not only saw it was brass, but said it; 3. Practical courage.[d]

his prosperity

a "The high places were the rival centres for the worship of Jehovah, standing in the place of the later synagogues, and they had hitherto been winked at, or, rather, regarded as legitimate, even by the best kings."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Idol gods in the form of serpents were adored as the emblems of health and immortality."—*Jamieson.*

d Dr. Thomas.

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"There is even a happiness that makes the heart afraid."—*Thomas Hood.*

c *Dr. Smith's O. T. History.*

The brazen serpent (*v.* 4).—The preservation of the brazen serpent for so many centuries, until it was destroyed by King Hezekiah, is a very remarkable fact. But the passion for relics is not extinguished by the destruction of its object. In A.D. 971, a Milanese envoy at Constantinople, being asked to select a present from the Imperial treasury, chose a brazen serpent which the Greeks assured him was made of the same metal that Hezekiah had broken up; and this serpent, probably the idol of some ophite sect (that is, serpent-worshipping, from "ophis," Greek for serpent), is still shown in the church of St. Ambrose, at Milan, as that which was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness.[c]

Assyrian invasion of Samaria

9—12. (9) **came to pass,** this account is already given, ch. xvii. 5—8. It seems reinserted here for the sake of fixing the Jewish dates in relation to it. (10) **three years,** ch. xvii. 5. (11) **Halah,** *etc.*, ch. xvii. 6. (12) **because,** *etc.*,[a] distinctly connecting national calamities with national sins.

a Ne. ix. 26, 27; Ps. cvii. 17; Da. ix. 6—10.

It is wonderful what strength of purpose and energy of will are communicated by the assurance that we are doing our duty. Many persons constitutionally timid, and averse to incurring danger, will manfully brave every opposition in its discharge. They feel confident that God is able and willing to protect them, and, should they fall, they know that they will receive their reward. The Bible, history sacred and profane, and our own observation, furnish many examples of this boldness of the righteous.

The testimony from antiquity.—Commenting on some Eastern sculptures he had seen, Sir R. K. Porter writes: "Besides, it may bear on our argument to remark that, including the prostrate monarch, there are precisely ten captives: who might be regarded as the representatives, or heads, of each tribe, beginning with the king, who assuredly would be considered as the chief of his; and ending with the aged figure at the end, whose high cap may have been an exaggerated representation of the mitre worn by the sacerdotal tribe of Levi: a just punishment of the priesthood at that time, which had debased itself by every species of idolatrous compliance with the whims, or rather wickedness of the people, in the adoption of pagan worship. Hence, having all walked in the statutes of the heathen, the Lord rejected Israel, and delivered them into the hand of the spoilers. Doubtless, the figure with the inscription on his garment, from the singularity of the appendage, must have been some noted personage in the history of the event; and besides, it seems to designate a striking peculiarity of the Jews, who were accustomed to write memorable sentences of old, in the form of phylacteries, on different parts of their raiment. What those may mean which cover his garment of this figure we have no means of explaining till the diligent researches of the learned may be able to decipher the arrow-headed character, and then a full light would be thrown on the whole history, by expounding the tablets over every head. If the aerial form above were ever intended to represent the heavenly apparition of a departed king, which is the opinion of some, that of the great Arbaces might appear here with striking propriety, at the final conquest of rebellious Israel. Should the discoveries of time prove my conjecture at all right, this bas-relief must be nearly two hundred years older than any which are ascribed to Cyrus, at Persepolis or Pasargadæ."

Assyrian invasion of Judah

13—16. (13) **fourteenth year,** comp. Is. xxxvi. 1. **Sennacherib,**[a] son and successor of Sargon. At this time engaged in expedition against Egypt.[b] **all,** not absolutely every one. Sennacherib boasted of taking 46. (14) **offended,** it seems that the temper of his people did not allow Hezekiah longer to resist. **return,** or retire, retreat. **appointed,** as tribute. **three hundred,** Sennac. boasts of 800. (15) **in the house,** fr.

a The *Sanacharibos* of Herodotus.

b "It was as the outposts of Egypt that the

these stores such tributes were usually taken.[d] (16) **pillars,** door-posts.

The invasion of Sennacherib (*vv.* 13, 14).—It is interesting to find in the annals of Sennacherib a full account of this campaign. "And because Hezekiah, king of Judah," says Sennacherib, "would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape. . . . Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty. . . . All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of his submission to my power." It is needless, however, to particularise the points of agreement between these narratives. The only discrepancy is in the amount of silver which Sennacherib received; and here we may easily conceive that the Assyrian king has exaggerated, or that he has counted in a portion of the spoil, while the sacred writer has merely mentioned the sum agreed to be paid as tribute. Layard, however, suggests that "it is probable that Hezekiah was much pressed by Sennacherib, and compelled to give him all the wealth that he could collect, as we find him actually taking the silver from the house of the Lord, as well as from his own treasury, etc. The Bible may therefore only include the actual amount of money in the three hundred talents of silver, whilst the Assyrian records comprise all the precious metals taken away."[c]

17—22. (17) **Tartan,** lofty; Is. xx. 1. **Rabsaris,** chief of the eunuchs. **Rabshakeh,** chief cup-bearer.[a] **Lachish,**[f] Jos. xv. 39. **conduit,** *etc.*, Is. vii. 3. The upper Gihon, west of Jerus. **fuller,** bleacher. Those engaged in this trade required to be near the water. (18) **Eliakim,**[c] a man of high character, who took the place of Shebna. **Shebna,** Is. xxii. 15—19. **scribe,** or secretary. **recorder,** 1 Ki. iv. 3. (19) **Rabshakeh said,** prob. he the speaker bec. knowing Heb.[d] **great king,** as ruling over other kings. (20) **vain words,** lit. "*a word of the lips.*" (21) **staff . . reed,** metaphor fr. the reed or bulrush of the Nile, wh. was quite useless as a staff.[e] (22) **whose altars,** Rabshakeh mistakes the character of Hez.'s reformation.

Rabshakeh's question to Hezekiah (*v.* 19).—I. The taunt of Rabshakeh. Founded on poverty and subjugation of Judah. Egypt a bruised reed. The Assyrian had no conception of higher help. II. The confidence of Hezekiah. He turned to Isaiah. Laid the letter before the Lord. Learn:—1. The soul of man needs something to rest on; 2. Some trust in self; 3. Some in Egypt—something external to self, as wealth, income, influence, a happy home; 4. No solid trust for man but God.[f]

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fortresses of southern Palestine stood in the way of his great designs. To have dried up the canals of the Nile was the climax of his ambition." —*Stanley.*

c Pr. xxix. 25 Lu. xiv. 31, 32.

d 2 Ki. xvi. 8.

v. 13. *Ep. Miles Smith*, 95.

c *Rawlinson's Bamp. Lec.*

"Such as do build their faith upon the holy text of pike and gun, decide all controversies by infallible artillery; and prove their doctrine orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks." —*Butler.*

"The old hope is hardest to be lost." — *E. B. Browning.*

Rabshakeh's message to Hezekiah

a "These were prob. official titles."—*Delitzsch.*

b "There is a series of Assyr. bas-reliefs, representing the siege of a town, wh. the inscription on the sculpture shows to be Lachish. The legend, over the head of the king, runs thus: 'Sennacherib, the mighty king, king of the country of Assyr., sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachish, I give pas-

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mission for its slaughter."—*Layard.*

c Is. xxii. 20—25.

d *Spk. Com.*: *Mildman* supposes he was a renegade Jew.

e "The practice of Egypt was to pretend friendship, to hold out hopes of support, and then to fail in time of need."—*Spk. Com.*

f *Dr. H. P. Liddon.*

g *Roberts.*

a "The court language of Assyria was an Aryan dialect."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 25. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 374.

"Mars is described by Homer very diffusely. Notwithstanding his power, he is represented as sometimes foiled, and even wounded, by a mortal. Minerva the poet he has characterised as the particular opponent of the god of war, and has always—*e.g.*, in the dispute between Ajax and Ulysses—crowned her with success: which indeed is no more than just—since wisdom is generally averse to entering into warlike contests at all; yet when engaged, it is likely to prevail over brute force, and to bear off the laurels of the day."—*Pope.*

b *Paxton.*

Trust in man.—As a traveller overtaken by a storm, having sought the shelter of some fair-spread oak, finds relief for some time, till suddenly the fierce wind tears some strong branch, which, falling, hurts the unsuspecting passenger: so fares it with not a few who run for shelter to the shade of some great man. "Had I served my God," said poor Wolsey, "as faithfully as I have served my king, He would not have forsaken me now." The Hindoos say of boasting words, or those which do not proceed from the heart, they are "words of the mouth;" but to speak evil of a person is called a *chondi-chadi*, a hint of the lip.[g]

23—26. (23) **pledges,** hostages. This seems, however, rather a taunt of Hez.'s weakness. He could not find as many *men* as Rabshakeh could find *horses.* (24) **one captain,** *etc.*, still taunting the king with his helplessness. (25) **without the Lord,** either this was a bold and unauthorised assertion, or he had heard of the prophecies concerning Judah. This above all else was calculated to shake the spirit of Hezekiah. (26) **Syrian,** *Aramaie*, the dialect of Damascus, and prob. popular[a] *language* of Assyria. **Jews' language,** Hebrew.

The armies of Israel (*v.* 23).—In the first periods of the Jewish history the armies of Israel consisted all of footmen. At length Solomon raised a body of twelve thousand horse, and fourteen hundred chariots, some with two, and others with four horses; but whether that magnificent prince intended them for pomp or war is uncertain. Infantry was also the chief strength of the Greek and Roman armies. Cavalry is not so necessary in warm climates, where the march of troops is less incommoded with bad roads; nor can they be of so much use in mountainous countries, where their movements are attended with great difficulty and hazard. The Eastern potentates, however, brought immense numbers of horse into the field, and chiefly trusted to their exertions for defence or conquest. The people of Israel, who were appointed to "dwell alone," and not to mingle with the nations around them, nor imitate their policy, were expressly forbidden to maintain large bodies of cavalry; and they accordingly prospered, or were defeated, as they obeyed or transgressed this Divine command, which, a celebrated author observes, cannot be justified by the measures of human prudence. Even upon political reasons, says Warburton, the Jews might be justified in the disuse of cavalry in the defence of their country, but not in conquering it from a warlike people, who abounded in horses. Here, at least, the exertion of an extraordinary Providence was wonderfully conspicuous. The kings who succeeded Solomon certainly raised a body of horse for the defence of their dominions, which they recruited from the studs of Egypt, in those times equally remarkable for their vigour and beauty. But the Jewish cavalry were seldom very numerous; and under the religious kings of David's line, who made the Divine law the rule of their policy, they were either disembodied altogether, or reduced to a very small number. In the reign of Hezekiah, when the country was invaded by the king of Assyria, the Jews seem to have had no force of this kind, for, said Rabshakeh, "Now, therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them."[b]

27–32. (27) **eat,** *etc.*,[a] these terms hint the straitness and distress of the siege that was threatened. Note the extreme and disgusting insolence of this man. (28) **Jews' language,** haughtily refusing to change his speech. (29) **his hand,** he should have said, *my* hand. (30) **trust in the Lord,** it was perilous work thus to scorn Jehovah. (31) **make,** *etc.*, Heb. *make with me a blessing*, or with a present seal peace with me. **cistern,** or well: rain-water cisterns were comparatively rare. (32) **like your own,** Nu. xiii. 27.[b]

The siege of Genoa.—In 1800, Genoa, occupied by 24,000 French troops, was besieged at once by a British fleet and a powerful Austrian army. We will not detail the horrors attendant on the sallies and assaults; but let us look at the condition of the soldiers and citizens within. The former, worn down by fatigue and wasted by famine, had consumed all the horses in the city, and were at length reduced to the necessity of feeding on dogs, cats, and vermin, which were eagerly hunted out in the cellars and common sewers. Soon, however, even these wretched resources failed; and they were brought to the pittance of four or five ounces a day of black bread made of cocoa, rye, and other substances ransacked from the shops of the city.—*Siege of St. Jean d'Acre.*—The bombardment of St. Jean d'Acre, in Syria. English newspapers of the day called "a most brilliant exploit;" but let us see what it was. "At half-past four in the morning," says an eye-witness, "all firing ceased, as if by one consent, when—what a sight!—the whole town seemed to be thrown into the air! We saw nothing but one dense cloud extending thousands of yards into the air on all sides; and then we felt an awful shock, which gave the line of battle-ships a heel of two degrees. It was the explosion caused by one of our shells bursting in their main magazine of powder, by which, to speak within bounds, two thousand souls, besides beasts of burden of every description, were blown to atoms! The entire loss of the Egyptians is computed at three thousand. At daylight what a sight was exposed to our view! The stupendous fortification, that only twelve hours before was among the strongest in the world, was so riddled that we could not find a square foot which had not a shot. I went ashore to witness the devastation; the sight beggared all description! The bastions were strewed with the dead, the guns dismounted, and all sorts of havoc. The spot of the explosion was far worse—a space of two acres laid quite bare, and hollowed out as if a quarry had been worked there for years! What a sight was there before me! Mangled human bodies, of both sexes, strewed in all directions, women searching for their husbands and other relatives, tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and howling and crying most piteously!"

33–37. (33) **any of the gods,** local gods of the conquered countries. (34) **Hamath,** *etc.*, ch. xvii. 24.[a] (35) **the Lord,** read Jehovah. Rabshakeh had to learn the mistake of classifying Jehovah with idols. (36) **held their peace,** so disappointing Rabshakeh, who expected to excite popular tumult. (37) **clothes rent,** in token of exceeding shame, grief, and anxiety.[b]

Grounds for trust in God.—When Martin Luther was writing to his friend, the chancellor, at the Diet of Augsburgh, you know many reformers at the time had their minds filled with great anxieties—Melancthon was very fearful—and many of the Pro-

B.C. *cir.* 726.

a 2 Chr. xxxii. 11.

b Nu. xiv. 7; De. i. 25, viii. 7–9, xi. 11, 12.

"O war! thou son of hell, whom angry heav'ns do make their minister, throw in the frozen bosoms of our part hot coals of vengeance! let no soldier fly: he that is truly dedicate to war, hath no self-love; for he that loves himself hath not essentially, but by circumstance, the name of valour." – *Shakespeare.*

During the War of Independence, an American officer was ordered to a station of extreme peril, when several friends around him suggested various expedients by which he might evade the dangerous post assigned him. He made them the following heroic reply: "I thank you for your solicitude. I know I can easily save my life; but who will save my honour, should I adopt your advice?"

the message is reported to Hezekiah

a 2 Ki. xix. 13; Is. x. 9, xxxvi. 19, xxxvii. 13; Je. xlix. 23.

b "The defiance was received by the people in dead silence. The

B.C. *cir.* 726.

three ministers tore their garments in horror, and appeared in that state before the king. He, too, gave way to the same uncontrolled burst of grief."—*Stanley.*

vv. 36, 37. *J. Boys, Rem.* 89.

e Coley.

testant princes were fearful, too; but glorious Luther, his heart was stout as a castle wall. He trusted in the Lord his God; nothing made him afraid; and he wrote, as I tell you, to the chancellor a letter, in which he says, "I fear not, and why should I fear? I have seen two miracles lately. I looked up, and saw the clouds above me in the noontide; and they looked like the sea that was hanging over me, and I could see no cord on which they were suspended, and yet they never fell. And then when the noontide had gone and the midnight came, I looked again, and there was the dome of heaven, and it was spangled with stars, and I could see no pillars that held up the skies, and yet they never fell. Now He that holds the stars up and moves the clouds in their course, He can do all things, and I trust Him in the sight of these miracles."[e]

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 710.

Hezekiah's humiliation

a Gesenius.

b Is. i. 1.

c De. v. 26; Jos. iii. 10; 1 Sa. xvii. 26; Ps. xlii. 2, lxxxiv. 2; Hos. i. 10; Je. x. 10, xxiii. 36; Da. vi. 26.

v. 1. *W. Jones, Ss. by Walker,* i. 274.

v. 3. *A Ser.* ea. by *Abp. Cornwallis, Dr. T. Church, J. W. Buckley.*

d Roberts.

"A noble heart, like the sun, showeth its greatest countenance in its lowest estate."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

1—5. (1) **rent,** *etc.*, sign chiefly of horror at Rabshakeh's blasphemy. **sackcloth,** sign of personal humiliation and penitence. **went,** *etc.*, not to worship, but to seek the oracle in his time of need. (2) **Isaiah,** *salvation of Jehovah*;[a] he had previously counselled the king.[b] (3) **rebuke,** or chastisement. **blasphemy,** or provocation. **children,** *etc.*, comp. Hos. xiii. 13; fig. for utter weakness to meet the present need. (4) **living God,**[c] contrast with lifeless idols. **remnant,** house of Judah. (5) **servants,** mentioned *v.* 2.

Failure at the last.—When a person has all but accomplished his object, when only a very slight obstacle has prevented him, it is then said, "The child came to the birth, but there was not strength to bring it forth." Some time ago, an opulent man accused another, who was also very rich, and in office, of improper conduct to the government: the matter was well investigated by competent authorities; but the accused, by his superior cunning and by bribes, escaped, as by the "skin of his teeth;" and the people said, "Alas! the child came to the mouth, but the hand could not take it." When a person has succeeded in gaining a blessing which he has long desired, he says, "Good, good! the child is born at last." Has a person lost his lawsuit in a provincial court, he will go to the capital to make an appeal to a superior court; and should he there succeed, he will say, in writing to a friend, "Good news, good news! the child is born." When a man has been trying to gain an office, his friend meeting him on return does not always ask, "Is the child born? or did it come to the birth?" but, "Is it a male or a female?" If he say the former, he has gained his object; if the latter, he has failed.[d]

Isaiah encourages Hezekiah

a "I will take possession of him by means of a panic, depriving him of his strength, and making him tremble and flee like a dastard before me."—*Wordsworth.*

6—13. (6) **blasphemed me,** Jehovah heard the insult, and would surely avenge His outraged honour. (7) **blast,** a spirit, fill him with a craven fear.[a] **rumour,** the expedition of Tirhakah, king of Egypt, *v.* 9. (8) **Libnah,**[b] near *Lachish*, but further toward Egypt. 30 m. S.W. of Jerus. (9) **Tirhakah,** third and last king of the 25th dynasty, wh. was of Ethiopians.[c] There seems to have been a contemporary king in Egypt at the time, one *Sethos*. **Ethiopia,** Cush.[d] (10) **deceive,** by assurances wh. Assyr. power should prove vain. (11) **all lands,** extravagant boast. (12) **my fathers,** esp. **Sargon, Gozan,** ch. viii. 11.

Haran, "the *Carrhæ* of the Gks. and Roms." **Rezeph,** *Razappa*, near Haran. **Eden,** the *Beni Eden*, name of a tribe. Poss. *Ehden*, near Damascus. **Thelasar,** per. Hill of Asshur.[e] (13) **Hamath,** *etc.*, ch. xvii. 24.

Destruction of Sennacherib's host.—The destruction of Sennacherib and his army appears to have been effected by that pestilential wind called the simoom. At Bagdad, October 9, 1818, Sir R. K. Porter informs us (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 229), the master of the khan "told me that they consider October the first month of their autumn, and feel it delightfully cool in comparison with July, August, and September; for that during forty days of the two first-named summer months, the hot wind blows from the desert, and its effects are often destructive. Its title is very appropriate, being called the samiel, or baude semoom, the pestilential wind. It does not come in continued long currents, but in gusts at different intervals, each blast lasting several minutes, and passing along with the rapidity of lightning. No one dare stir from their houses while this invisible flame is sweeping over the face of the country. Previous to its approach the atmosphere becomes thick and suffocating, and appearing particularly dense near the horizon, gives sufficient warning of the threatened mischief. Though hostile to human life, it is so far from being prejudicial to the vegetable creation, that a continuance of the samiel tends to ripen the fruits. I inquired what became of the cattle during such a plague, and was told they were seldom touched by it. It seems strange that their lungs should be so perfectly insensible to what seems instant destruction to the breath of man; but so it is, that they are regularly driven down to water at the customary times of day, even when the blasts are at the severest. The people who attend them are obliged to plaster their own faces, and other parts of the body usually exposed to the air, with a sort of muddy clay, which, in general, protects them from its most malignant effects. The periods of the winds' blowing are generally from noon till sunset; they cease almost entirely during the night; and the direction of the gusts is always from the north-east. When it has passed over, a sulphuric, and indeed loathsome smell, like putridity, remains for a long time. The poison which occasions this smell must be deadly; for if any unfortunate traveller, too far from shelter, meet the blast, he falls immediately; and in a few minutes his flesh becomes almost black, while both it and his bones at once arrive at so extreme a state of corruption, that the smallest movement of the body would separate the one from the other."[f]

14—19. (14) **spread it,** laid it down before the veil of the holy of holies. (15) **dwellest,** *etc.*,[a] there the symbol of Div. presence rested. **the God,** "this is the protest of the pure theist." (16) **sent him,** wh. he hath sent. **living God,** *v.* 4. (17) **destroyed,** *etc.*, their gods not being able to deliver. (18) **fire,** they could be no gods that could be burnt. (19) **save thou,** *etc.*, Hez. urges preservation of the Div. honour[b] which was thus grievously assailed.

Proof of trust in God.—There was an action that Alexander the Great did, which I use only to express what I mean by trusting in God. When he was sick, there comes a friend that was always close with him, who was a physician, and he prepared him a potion; but before it was given, there was a letter deli-

B.C. *cir.* 710.

b Jos. x. 29--32.

c "The name is written in hieroglyphics TE-HARKA. Sculptures at Thebe commemorate his rule, and at Gebel-Berkel, or Napata, he constructed one temple and part of another. Of the events of his reign little else is known. It is prob. that, at the close of his reign, he found the Assyr. too powerful, and retired to his Ethiopian dominions."—*Smith's Bib. Dict.*

d Is. xliii. 3, xlv. 14; Je. xiii. 23.

e Rawlinson.

f Robinson.

"It is estimated that the war of Rebellion cost this country not less than a thousand millions of dollars, and a million of precious lives. This sum would have supported a missionary to every three hundred pagans in the world; and the men might better have been given to this work than to have pined in prisons, or laid down in unmarked graves."—*American.*

Hezekiah spreads letter of Assyrian before the Lord

a Ps. lxxx. 1.

b Ez. xxxvi. 22, 23.

v. 14. *R. Warner, Ch. Prin.* iii. 80; *H. J. Hastings*, 197.

B.C. *cir.* 710.

v. 19. *Dr. R. Parkinson*, ii. 276.

c Preston.

Isaiah instructs Hezekiah how to reply

a Bp. Patrick.

b Ps. xxii. 7, cix. 25; Lam. ii. 15; Mat. xxvii. 39.

c Spk. Com.; Ps. lxxi. 22, lxxviii. 41, lxxxix. 18; Je. l. 29, ii. 5.

d Gesenius.

e Keil.

f "The meaning seems to be—Mountains do not stop me, I cross them even in my chariots. Deserts do not stop me, I dig wells there, and drink the water. Rivers do not stop me, I pass them as easily as if they were dry land."—*Spk. Com.*

g J. W. Bardsley.

Dust, by its own nature, can rise only so far above the road; and birds which fly higher never have it upon their wings. So the heart that knows how to fly high enough escapes those little cares and vexations which brood upon the earth, but cannot rise above it into that purer air.

vered to him to signify that that very potion was poison. When his friend came with his potion in his hand, Alexander takes the letter that was sent to give him notice of the treason, and drinks off the cup with one hand, and reaches the letter with the other; so he drank off the cup before he showed the letter. How he trusted him! If he had failed him, Alexander had lost his life. He did not first show him the letter, and hear what he had to say; but he showed that he trusted him. And know, except thou do it thus, God is not ready to help thee.[c]

20—24. (20) **against Sennac.**, in regard to him. (21) **virgin,** Zion is so called, because it had never been violated by entrance of an enemy since Dav.'s time.[a] Obs. that Is.'s words are addressed to Sennacherib. **shaken her head,** the gesture of scorn.[b] (22) **Holy of Israel,** "this phrase occurs in Is.'s prophecies 27 times, and only five times in the rest of Scrip."[c] (23) **hast said,** Is. trans. the king's pride. **lodgings,** *etc.*, "lodge of its (Lebanon's) end:" some actual habitation;[d] or the highest point of the range.[e] **his Carmel,** better, *its garden-like forest.* (24) **strange waters,** making wells for myself.[f] **dried up,** anticipation of conquest of Egypt, the land of canals and brooks.

Assyrian invasions (*v.* 23).—Here before us is an Assyrian tablet, about the size and height of an ordinary door, with a figure which at once recalls the sculptures with which Layard's "Nineveh" has made us familiar. The inscription, could we read it, would verify the proud boast of Sennacherib. There are at Nahr-el-Kelb six Assyrian tablets and three Egyptian. Layard thinks them all (the Assyrian) to be the work of this monarch, but Dr. Robinson suggests that as five Assyrian kings invaded Palestine, or passed through it on their way to Egypt. these tablets commemorate successive passages of their armies over this wild and sea-girt pass.[g]—*The French armament.*—The destruction of the French armament, under the Duke d'Anville, in the year 1746, ought to be remembered with gratitude and admiration by every inhabitant of this country. This fleet consisted of forty ships of war; was destined for the destruction of New England, was of sufficient force to render that destruction, in the ordinary progress of things, certain; and sailed from Chebucto in Nova Scotia for this purpose. In the meantime, our pious fathers, apprised of their danger, and feeling that their only safety was in God, had appointed a season of fasting and prayer to be observed in all their churches. While Mr. Prince was officiating in this church (Old South Church) on this fast day, and praying most fervently to God to avert the dreadful calamity, a sudden gust of wind arose (the day had till now been perfectly clear and calm), so violent as to cause a loud clattering of the windows. The reverend pastor paused in his prayer, and, looking round upon the congregation with a countenance of hope, he again commenced, and with great devotional ardour supplicated the Almighty God to cause that wind to frustrate the object of our enemies, and save the country from conquest and popery. A tempest ensued in which the greater part of the French fleet was wrecked on the coast of Nova Scotia. The Duke d'Anville the principal general, and the second in command, both committed suicide. Many died with disease, and thousands were consigned to a watery grave. The small number that re-

mained alive, returned to France without health and without spirits. And the enterprise was abandoned, and never again resumed.[h]

B.C. *cir.* 710.

h Dr. Cheever.

25—28. (25) **hast thou,** *etc.*, a sudden transition. God now speaks, and tells the boaster that he. and all conquerors. do but execute Div. commissions.[a] (26) **small power,** weak of hand. **grass . . tops,** Ps. cxxix. 6; growing on the flat roofs. (27) **abode,** marg. *sitting.* **going out,** *etc.*, all thy doings. (28) **hook,** or *ring;* treating thee as a wild beast.[b] **bridle,** driving thee as a horse.[c]

Small power (*v.* 26).—The Hebrew has. instead of small power, "short of hand." This figure is much used here, and is taken from a man trying to reach an object for which his arm is not long enough. When it is wished to ascertain what is a man's capacity or power, it is asked, "Is his arm long or short?" "Let me tell you, friend, Tamban will never succeed; his arm is not long enough." Of feeble people it is said, 'they have short hands."[d]

The hook in the nose.—The dromedary differs from the common camel in being of a finer and rounder shape, and in having upon its back a smaller protuberance. This species (for the former, seldom deviating from the beaten road, travels with its head at liberty) is governed by a bridle, which being usually fastened to a ring fixed in its nostrils, may very well illustrate the expression which the sacred writer uses concerning Sennacherib: "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." These words refer at once to the absolute control of heaven, under which he acted, and the swiftness of his retreat.[e]

a "The histories of the Cæsars, Alexanders, and Napoleons of this world may be summed up in this verse."—*Wordsworth.*

b Eze. xxix. 4.

c Ps. xxxii. 9.

vv. 27, 28. *A Ser.* by *J. Stennett*, and two by *F. Shaw.*

d Roberts.

As good housekeeping is essential to domestic comfort, so good heart-keeping is essential to healthful and happy piety.

e Paxton.

29—34. (29) **unto thee,** *i.e.* Hezekiah. **grow of themselves,** though unsown, the land for two years should yield sufficient by natural sowing. In the third year they should resume agriculture, and be undisturbed. (30) **remnant,** as *v.* 4. **bear fruit,** as in time of Josiah.[a] (31) **go forth,** *i.e.* return in security to their country, homes, and occupations. **zeal,** Is. ix. 7. (32) **shoot,** *etc.*, by this act giving order for an assault. **shield,** screen under wh. attack may be made on walls and gates. **bank,** fr. wh. to throw missiles. (33) **by the way,** *etc.*, intimation of hasty retreat, *v.* 28. (34) **mine own sake,** upholding my insulted honour.

and assures Hezekiah of the defeat of Assyria

a 2 Ki. xxiii. 15—20.

vv. 33, 34. *A Ser.* by *Dr. L. Howard.*

v. 34. *C. Kingsley, Ss. for Times*, 221.

Hezekiah's deliverance from Sennacherib (*vv.* 30, 31).—These words are a part of the answer given from the Lord to the supplications of Hezekiah: and we shall find it not unprofitable to consider—I. The promise contained in them. II. The instruction to be derived from it. Learn—1. The interest which God takes in His Church and people; 2. The efficacy of believing prayer.[b]

b C. Simeon, M.A.

Trust in God.—The blows by which people are endeavouring to subvert the house of God are so rude, and the assaults made upon it are so frequent, that it is not only the winds and the rain that beat upon it, according to our Lord's prediction, but hail and lightning. Had I not perceived that the Lord was preserving the vessel, I should long ago have thrown the helm into the sea. I behold Him through the tempest, strengthening the cordage, adjusting the yards, spreading the sails; what do I say? commanding the very winds; . . . . should I not then be a coward

Wars since 1848.—Since 1848, there has been at lesser intervals than six years, actual or threatened war. Thus in 1854 there was the Crimean War, in 1857 the Indian Mutiny, in 1859 the Italian War, in 1863 the American War and the Trent affair, in 1864 the Danish War,

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unworthy of the name of man were I to abandon my post in order to find a shameful death in flight? I commit myself wholly to His sovereign goodness: let Him govern, let Him transport, let Him hasten, let Him delay, let Him accelerate, let Him retard, let Him even plunge us into the bottom of the abyss, we will fear nothing; we are earthen vessels that belong to Him. He can employ us in His service according to His good pleasure, whether for honour or dishonour.[c]

the host of Assyria destroyed

35—37. (35) **that night**, the one following on Is.'s prophecy. **smote**, either by pestilence, or hot poisonous wind.[a] **in the camp**, at this time some distance fr. Jerusalem, and towards the Egyp. deserts. **they arose**, the king, and the few spared. (36) **departed**, hurriedly, in haste and fear.[b] **Nineveh**, the Assyrian capital (Jonah i. 2). (37) **Nisroc**, not certainly identified. Poss. Assarac, or Asshur, the head of the Assyr. pantheon: represented as a winged figure in a circle. Poss. the name of the temple, not the god. **Armenia**, lit. *land of Ararat*.

The destruction of Sennacherib (*v.* 35).—The events recorded of this memorable night develop the force of—I. Wickedness. The fact that wickedness is allowed great power on this earth shows—1. The regard which God has for the free agency of the human mind; 2. The wonderful forbearance of God; 3. The certainty of a future retribution. II. Justice. 1. Justice will not always sleep; 2. When roused, it does its work with ease; 3. Its work involves ruin to the wicked, but salvation to the good. III. Prayer. Observe—1. Hezekiah's prayer; 2. The answer. Instrumentally, it was prayer that now delivered Jerusalem. Learn—(1) That wickedness, however triumphant, must end in ruin; (2) That goodness, however threatened, shall end in a glorious deliverance.[c]

Destruction of Sennacherib's host.—

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
Like the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
That host, with their banners, at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest, when autumn hath blown,
That host, on the morrow, lay withered and strown.
For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed:
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!
And there lay the steed, with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.
And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
The tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances uplifted, the trumpet unblown.
And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance the Lord!

In 1866 the Austro-Prussian War.—*Leisure Hour* for Jan., 1871.

c Zwingle.

a "Some have thought the powerful natural agent employed was the hot pestilential wind, the simoon, wh. is often represented as suddenly destroying travellers, and indeed whole caravans. The effects of this wind are felt most strongly in the heart of the great deserts, and with mitigated results the farther one recedes from them."—*Kitto.*

"On the whole it would seem that all mere natural causes must be rejected." — *Spk. Com.*

b Comp. 1 Ki. xix. 3; Ps. lxxvi. is entitled in the LXX. a Song of Thanksgiving for Deliverance from the Assyrians.

c Dr. Thomas.

"The route is described Is. x. The early chariot track near Beyrout is on the rocky edge of Lebanon, wh. is skirted by the ancient Lycus, *Nahr-el kelb.*" — *Jamieson.*

v. 37. *W. Reading*, ii. 456.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

B.C. 713.

1—7. (1) **those days,** just before, or the very year of the Syrian invasion.[a] **sick unto death,**[b] of disease likely to prove fatal. **set,** *etc.*, arrange thy affairs. (2) **to the wall,** so securing privacy[c] for devotion. (3) **perfect,** here, as often in Scrip., put for *sincere.* **wept sore,** tho' 40 years of age, he had at this time no son to succeed him on his throne. (4) **middle court,** of the royal palace.[d] (5) **captain,** name given to David, and applied to Dav.'s true followers. (6) **fifteen years,** this decides in what year of his reign this occurred. (7) **boil,** of a very dangerous kind.

Preparations for death essentially necessary (*v.* 1).—I. We must all die. 1. We *must* all die. The decree is gone forth; 2. We *may* die soon: no age, no situation, no description of person or character is exempt; 3. Death terminates all our present joys and sorrows; 4. Death ends our probation for eternity. II. To be prepared for death is a duty solemnly incumbent on each of us. This preparation respects—1. The present world; 2. The world to come.

Making a will.—Not many, it may be feared, have reason to be contented that everything should lie at the hour of their death, just as it doth now. Some have spent a great part of their lives in putting their houses out of order, in perplexing and ruining their affairs by extravagance, negligence, or ill-management. These have singular need to restore them without delay to the best posture they can. And such as may have acted very prudently on the supposition of living long, may yet have done little or nothing in regard to the possibility of dying soon. Now sickness frequently affords but little time; and almost always brings along with it uneasiness full enough for us to bear, without the additional weight of business. Besides, in that condition our judgment, or memory, or attention may be impaired. Weakness of spirits may subject us to undue impressions from those who are about us: our truest friends and ablest and properest advisers may be accidentally absent, or artfully kept from us: in short, one way or another, there is a great hazard of our doing things wrongly, or at best imperfectly. Fears or suspicions of this may grievously disquiet us, and add to our danger; or, though we apprehend that no evils will arise, from our want of timely caution, to those whom we leave behind us, they may come to feel very dreadful ones.[e]

sickness of Hezekiah

a Comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 2 and 13.

See also Is. xxxviii.

b The remedy suggests that Hez. was suffering fr. some kind of carbuncle. Is. xxxviii. 21; 2 Ki. xx. 7.

c Comp. Ahab, 1 Ki. xxi. 4.

d Prefer this to marg. reading, *city.*

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

v. 1. *Bp. Wilson,* iv. 351; *Dr. W. Adams,* ii. 903; *A. Lutlin,* i. 262; *T. Wheatland,* 297; *S. Green,* 1; *Dr. G. D'Oyly,* i. 305.

vv. 2, 3. *C. Simeon,* iii. 547.

v. 5. *S. Smith's* 419.

"If thou expect death as a friend, prepare to entertain it: if thou expect death as an enemy, prepare to overcome it: death has no advantage, but when it comes a stranger." — *Quarles.*

e Abp. Secker.

8—11. (8) **sign,** of so extraordinary a recovery. Signs may be asked rightly as well as wrongly.[a] (9) **go forward,** *etc.*, he was so far permitted to fix his own sign.[b] **ten degrees,** or steps. (10) **light thing,** forward was its regular course: it would be a surprising and mirac. thing for it to go back. (11) **dial of Ahaz,**[c] "Sundials had been invented by the Babylonians before the time of Herodotus."

Sundials (*v.* 11).—I. Being oft found in churchyards, their inscriptions are often Scriptural. II. In giving advice they are, like some people, surly in manner. III. Some are metaphysical, yet instructive. IV. Some try to be witty. V. Some bear testimony to gratitude. VI. Some are very modest. VII. Some

the dial of Ahaz

a Comp. Ju. vi. 17, 37, 39; Mat. xii. 39.

b Is. vii. 11.

c "Some have supposed that it was a stair so artfully contrived that the shadow on the steps indicated

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the hours and the course of the sun."—*Jamieson.*

"A partial eclipse of the sun took place at Jerus., as far as can be known, in the year of Hez.'s illness. This is a poss. natural cause of the phenomenon."—*Stanley.*

d Preacher's Lantern.

"What is time?—the shadow on the dial,—the striking of the clock,—the running of the sand,—day and night,—summer and winter,-months, years, centuries. These are but arbitrary and outward signs,—the measure of time, not time itself. Time is the life of the soul. If not this,—then tell me what is time?"—*Longfellow.*

"Since time is not a person we can overtake when he is past, let us honour him with mirth and cheerfulness of heart while he is passing."—*Goethe.*

e Mrs. Gatty's Book of Sundials.

Hezekiah receives messengers from Babylon

assert their infallibility. VIII. Some rouse to action. IX. Some serve the purposes of pleasure. X. Some are admonitory.[d]

Inscriptions on dials to illustrate the above divisions respectively. Thus on—I. At Ecclesfield we have, "Watch, for ye know not the hour." At Aynho, near Bicester, "Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have the light." On—II. At High Lane, near Disley, in Cheshire, "Begone about your business." It was removed thither from the Inner Temple. The benchers had met to choose a motto, and departed without doing so. The messenger coming for the motto found an old gentleman poring over a book, who said, when he said he was come for the motto, "Begone," etc. One at Guilsborough, Northamptonshire, has, "Opportunity has hair in front, and is bald behind." At Heslington Hall, York, "Snatch the day." At Austin Friars, "The shadow teaches." At Bishopsthorpe, near York, "Slippery time." On—III. At Eastlake Church, Nottinghamshire, "Now is yesterday's to-morrow." Over the Custom House of the Splugen Pass, near Campo Dolcino, "With the shade nothing, without the shade nothing." On—IV. At Buxted, Sussex. "We shall——" the reader is expected to supply, "Di-all." At Calgaith, near Penrith, there is a conversation—"(Dial), 'Staie, Passenger, tell me my name, thy nature.' (Pass.), 'Thy name is Die all, I a mortall Creature.' (Dial), 'Since my Name and thy Nature soe agree, Thinke on Thy Selfe when thou Looks upon me.'" On—V One, named in *Friends in Council*, has, "I only reckon the bright hours." At Geneva, "After darkness, light." On—VI. A French one has, "Nothing without the sun." An Italian, "I am silent without the sun." On—VII. One has, "The maker may err; the iron may err: I never err." And another, "The rod is of iron, the motion of shadow." On—VIII. At Elsworth, near Cambridge, and Dennington, Suffolk, "Soon comes night." At Ellerslie, near Chichester, "No day without its mark." At Northallerton, "Pray and work." At Oldham—

"Abuse me not, I do no ill;
I stand to serve thee with good will;
As careful then be sure you be
To serve thy God, as I serve thee."

On—IX. Over a public-house, "The hour for drinking." In a villa, "Here you may indulge your taste—do what you like." On—X. At Constantinople, "Didst thou not see the Lord, how He extended thy shadow?" At Arley Hall, Cheshire—

"May the dread book at our last trial,
When open spread, be like this Dial;
May heaven forbear to mark therein
The hours made dark by deeds of sin;
Those only in that record write
Which virtue, like the sun, makes bright."[e]

12—15. (12) **Berodach,**[a] prop. Merodach, Is. xxxix. 1. "He reigned 12 yrs., was then deposed, ultimately recovered his throne, reigned 6 months, and was then murdered. **king of Babylon,** now first mentioned. **heard,** comp. 2 Chr. xxxii. 31. (13) **shewed them,** the relations of this king to Sargon led Hez. to think his aid might be valuable, and this induced him to show his treasures, and produce a favourable impression on his visitors. (14) **Babylon,** at this time quite an unknown country to the Jews. (15) **all,** *etc.*, as *v.* 13.

a "The rival, or rebel king against the Assyr. Many motives may have conspired to

Timekeepers (*v.* 11).—At the beginning of the world it is certain there was no distinction of time but by the light and darkness, and the whole day was included in the general terms of the evening and morning. The Chaldæans, many ages after the flood, were the first who divided the day into hours; they being the first who applied themselves with any success to astrology. Sundials are of ancient use: but as they were of no service in cloudy weather and in the night, there was another invention of measuring the parts of time by water, but that not proving sufficiently exact, they laid it aside for another by sand. The use of dials were earlier among the Greeks than the Romans. It was about three hundred years after the building of Rome before they knew anything of them: but yet they had divided the day and night into twenty-four hours, though they did not count the hours numerically, but from midnight to midnight, distinguishing them by particular names, as by the cock-crowing, the dawn, the midday, etc. The first sundial we read of among the Romans, which divided the day into hours, is mentioned by Pliny, as fixed upon the temple of Quirinus by L. Papyrius, the censor, about the twelfth year of the wars with Pyrrhus. Scipio Nasica, some years after, measured the day and night into hours from the dropping of water.[c]

16—21. (16) **hear,** a solemn introduction to his message. (17) **fathers,** *etc.*, the temple treasures. **carried unto Bab.,** tho' now it seemed an insignificant country and excited no fear, it would become their greatest scourge.[a] (18) **eunuchs,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11; Da. i. 3. (19) **good,** spoken in the spirit of submission. **is it not good,** better treated as an appeal. "Shall there not be," etc. (20) **rest,** 2 Chr. xxix.—xxxii. **pool,**[b] ch. xviii. 17. (21) **slept,** *etc.*, his funeral was an unusually honoured one.[c]

Hezekiah's question (*v.* 19).—Observe—I. We all should be deeply interested in our own times. Our times—1. Are ever associated with great blessings; 2. Are most specially signalised by Christian mercies; 3. Are remarkable for benevolent and educational institutions; 4. Involve great responsibility; 5. Will tell on the ages to come. II. Two things should be pre-eminently important to us. 1. Peace—national, religious; 2. Truth. III. The realisation of these must be good. These are good—1. In themselves; 2. In their influence; 3. In their results.[d]

Resignation under severe trial.—I remember I saw an old officer, having his son with him (a fine man, about twenty years of age), going into the tent to dine. Whilst they were at dinner, a shot from the bastion of St. Antonio took off the head of the son. The father immediately rose up, first looking down upon his headless child, and then lifting up his eyes to heaven, whilst the tears ran down his cheeks, only said, "Thy will be done!" It was a sad spectacle, and truly it affects me even now whilst I am writing.[e]

Resignation.—

Since thy Father's arm sustains thee,
Peaceful be;
When a chastening hand restrains thee,
It is He.
Know—His love in full completeness
Fills the measure of thy weakness;

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draw these strangers to Palestine. It may have been to contract an alliance with the now powerful Hezekiah against the declining empire of Assyr. It may have been, as the general tenor of the narrative indicates, to observe the internal resources of the country."—*Stanley.*

b 2 Chr. xxxii. 31.

v. 15. *L. Sterne,* iii. 21.

c Burder.

death of Hezekiah

a 1 Ki. xxiv. 13, xxv. 13; Jer. xxvii. 19—22.

b "The pool now called the pool of Hez. lies to the N.E. of the Jaffa gate, and W. of the street that leads to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and is now the *Birket-el-Hummâm.*"—*Robinson.*

c 2 Chr. xxxii. 33.

v. 19. *C. Simeon, M.A.*, iii. 350.

v. 21. *F. Scott, Surtees, Hezekiah.*

d Dr. J. Burns.

e Capt. Carleton.

Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambray, author of *Telemachus,* when his illustrious pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, lay dead in his coffin, on coming into the room where the nobles of his court stood weeping around the corpse—fixing his eyes upon

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If He wound thy spirit sore,
Trust Him more.
Without murmur, uncomplaining,
In His hand
Lay whatever things thou canst not
Understand;
Though the world thy folly spurneth,
From thy faith in pity turneth,
Peace thy inmost soul shall fill,
Lying still!
Like an infant, if thou thinkest
Thou canst stand,
Childlike, proudly pushing back
The offered hand,
Courage soon is changed to fear,
Strength does feebleness appear:—
In His love if thou abide,
He will guide.
Fearest sometimes that thy Father
Hath forgot?
When the clouds around thee gather,
Doubt Him not.
Always hath the daylight broken,
Always hath He comfort spoken,
Better hath He been for years
Than thy fears.
Therefore, whatsoe'er betideth
Night or day,
Know—His love for thee provideth
Good alway.
Crown of sorrow gladly take,
Grateful wear it for His sake,
Sweetly bending to His will,
Lying still.
To His own thy Saviour giveth
Daily strength;
To each troubled soul that liveth,
Peace at length;—
Weakest lambs have largest share
Of this tender Shepherd's care;
Ask Him not then, "when" or "how"—
Only bow*f*

f From the German.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

B.C. *cir.* 693.

1—5. (1) **Manasseh,** *forgetting*, so called bec. in the birth of an heir God made Hez. *forget* his grief.[a] **fifty and five,** so 2 Chr. xxxiii. 1; LXX.; and Josephus.[b] **Hephzi-bah** *my delight is in her.*[c] (2) **evil,** under the bad influence of the Jewish nobles.[d] (3) **high places,** ch. xviii. 4. **grove,**[e] Asherah, see 1 Ki. xvi. 33. **host of heaven,** De. iv. 19. Sabaism, or star-worship without images. (4) **in the house,** *see* v. 5. (5) **two courts,** idol altars not within actual temple building, but within the precincts.

a Ge. xli. 51.
b Some chronologists limit this reign to 35 years.
c Ps. lxii. 4.
d "Some of the aristocracy who had been most powerful at the court of Ahaz seem to have

it, broke out, at length, in terms to this effect—"There lies my beloved prince, for whom my affection was a equal to the tenderest parent. Nor was my affection lost: he loved me in return with the ardour of a son. There he lies, and all my worldly happiness lies dead with him. But if the turning of a straw would call him back to life, I would not, for ten thousand worlds, be the turner of that straw, in opposition to the will of God."

"Come, Resignation, spirit meek, and let me kiss thy placid cheek, and read in thy pale eye serene their blessing, who by faith can wean their hearts from sense, and learn to love God only, and the joys above." —*Keble.*

Sabat's wretchedness.—After poor Sabat, an Arabian, who had professed faith in Christ by means of the labours of the Rev. Henry Martyn, had apostatised from Christianity, and written a book in favour of Mohammedanism, he was met at Malacca by the Rev. Dr. Milne, who proposed to him some very pointed questions; in reply to which he said, "I am unhappy! I have a mountain of burning sand on my head! When I go about, I know not what I am doing." It is indeed "an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord our God."

6—9. (6) **thro' the fire,**[a] ch. xvi. 3. **observed times,**[b] De. xviii. 10. **enchantments,** Le. xix. 26—31. **familiar spirits,** *etc.*, Le. xix. 31.[c] (7) **graven image,** *etc.*, better, *the carved work of the Asherah*, *v.* 3. **Lord said,** 2 Sa. vii. 10—13, 25—29.[d] (8) **only,** God's promise rested on a strict condition. (9) **seduced,** by the bad example of the court.

The evils of a bad example (*v.* 9).—I. The principal methods by which the wicked try to seduce men to sin. 1. Conversation; 2. Example; 3. Bribery; 4. Literature. II. Considerations to prevent men from yielding. 1. The voice of Scripture; 2. The deceitfulness and danger of sin; 3. Consequences of yielding. III. Some words of advice. 1. Seek a new heart; 2. Study the Bible daily; 3. Seek Divine grace; 4. Feel that you are in the enemy's country.

Evil influence of example.—Be vicious, and viciousness may go down as an heirloom in half a hundred families; be inconsistent, and enmity to the Gospel may be propagated over a parish; give occasions of offence, and many may fall; those who are entering in the narrow way may be discouraged, and those who have already entered may be made to stumble. Ye live not for yourselves; ye cannot live for yourselves; a thousand fibres connect you with your fellow-men, and along those fibres, as along sympathetic threads, run your actions as causes, and return to you as effects.[e]

10—16. (10) **prophets,** poss. Habakkuk.[a] (11) **Amorites did,** 1 Ki. xxi. 26. (12) **tingle,**[b] 1 Sa. iii. 11. (13) **line . . plummet,**[c] used in building; here used proverbially for the same measure and rule. **wipe,** *etc.*, fig. for entire removal of the people, and desolation of city. (14) **forsake,** temporarily, and in judgment; not finally. (15) **done evil,** *etc.*, the tendency to idolatry had been constantly manifest. (16) **innocent blood,** of the Jehovah worshippers.[d]

Passing through the fire (*v.* 11.)—Bodin informs us from Maimonides that it was customary among the Amorites to draw their new-born children through a flame, believing that by this means they would escape many calamities; and that Maimonides himself had been an eye-witness of this superstition in some of the nurses of Egypt.[e]

17—22. (17) **rest,** 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11—20. (18) **garden,** of the royal palace, poss. bec. the catacomb of David was full. **Amon,**[a] same name as Egyp. deity worshipped at Thebes. This may be however derived fr. Heb. *aman*, to establish.[b] (19) **Meshullemeth,** an Idumœan, if Jotbah[c] be identified with *Jotbathah*, of Nu. xxxiii. 33, 34. (20) **as his father,** evil of the worst heathen type. (21) **walked,** *etc.*, comp. descrip. in Zep. i.

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taken possession of their youthful sovereign on the death of the good Hezekiah, and thus early and permanently corrupted his mind."—*Ewald.*

e For worship of Astarte, see Je. vii. 17, 18.

Manasseh's idolatry

a Je. xxxii. 35; Eze. xxiii. 37.

b "This has been explained as—1. Predicting from state of clouds and atmosphere (*Keil*); 2. Fascination with the eye (*Vitringa*); 3. Watching and Catching at chance words as ominous (*Farrar*)."—*Spk. Com.*

c Is. viii. 19, xxix. 4.

Comp. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 16, xxxv. 3.

d Also 1 Ki. viii. 29, ix. 3—9; Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.

e H. Melvill.

prophecy against Manasseh

a Keil. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 18.

b Je. xix. 3.

c Is. xxxiv. 11; La. ii. 8; Am. vii. 7; Zec. i. 16.

d "There is a widespread tradition that the prophet Isaiah was one of his victims."—*Wordsworth, Stanley*, etc.

e Burder.

death of Manasseh, Amon

a "The only name of an Egyptian deity that we find in the Jewish annals."—*Stanley.*

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b Gesenius.

c It may be the *Jotbah* of De. x. 7.

d Dr. Muvduff.

"Parents are o'erseen, when, with too strict a rein, they do hold in their child's affections and control that love which the powers Divine instruct them with: when in their shallow judgments, they may know, affection cross'd, brings misery and woe."—*Robert Taylour.*

"Those that are bound for heaven must be willing to swim against the stream, and must not do as most do, but as the best do."—*Henry.*

e W. Holmes.

death of Amon

"Parents must give good example and reverent deportment in the face of their children. And all those instances of charity which usually endear each other—sweetness of conversation, affability, frequent admonition—all signification of love and tenderness, care and watchfulness must be expressed towards children; that they may look upon their parents as their friends and patrons, their defence and sanctuary, their

4—12, iii. 1—7. (22) **forsook,** to which he may have been forced in his father's later years.

A dark day and a bright sunset (*vv.* 17, 18).—Here is an unostentatious, an unhonoured, an unepitaphed grave. We have to trace, in Manasseh's case, a sunrise of promise, soon obscured with clouds of guilt and crime. These clouds burst in floods of penitence and sorrow. A meridian of sudden brilliancy follows. The sky clears, and the orb of a chequered life sets cloudless and serene on the hills of Judah. Standing by his grave, let us consider—I. Manasseh's sin. Look at—1. His early training. Hezekiah would well bring him up; 2. The baneful influence his creed and example had on his subjects; 3. His repeated and obdurate rejection of Divine warning. II. His conversion. His dungeon became to him as the gate of heaven. Note here the wonderful power of sanctified affliction. III. His new life. The grand test of the reality of conversion is the regenerated being. The tree is known by its fruits. We read that when God had brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom, "then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God."[d]

Description of true repentance.—

On bended knees, replete with godly grief,
See, where the mourner kneels to seek relief;
No "God I thank Thee," freezes on his tongue,
For works of merit that to him belong;
Deep in his soul conviction's ploughshare rings,
And to the surface his corruption brings;
He loathes himself, in lowest dust he lies,
And, all abased, "Unclean, unclean," he cries.
From his full heart pours forth the gushing plea,
"God of the lost, be merciful to me!"
The light of life descends in heavenly rays,
And angels shout, and sing, "Behold, he prays."[e]

23—26. (23) **conspired,** either bec. some were zealous for Jehovah's worship; or more prob. bec. renewed idolatry meant renewed tyranny. **people of the land,** "tumultuously (it would seem) arrested them and put them to death." (25) **rest,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxxiii. 21—25. (26) **in the garden,** *v.* 18.

Parental example.—The ancient Romans were accustomed to place the busts of their distinguished ancestors in the vestibules of their houses, that they might be continually reminded of their noble deeds. They supposed that a recollection of their illustrious virtues would lead to the imitation of the same by all the living members of their households. There is no doubt that the influence of this practice was most happy upon the living, awakening in many breasts high and noble aspirations. At any rate, history records the names of many renowned Romans who descended from the families in which this custom was observed. The young grew up to reverence the worthies whose statues they daily saw, and to emulate the virtues which gave their ancestors such lasting fame. In these days, we have no busts of honoured ancestors in the porches of our dwellings; but we have something more impressive. The characters of living parents are constantly presented for the imitation of children. Their example is continually sending forth a silent power to mould young hearts for good or ill; not for a single month or year, but through the whole impressible period of childhood and youth,

the influence of parental example is thus felt. If it be constituted of the highest and purest elements, the results will be unspeakably precious. Sons and daughters will become patterns of propriety and goodness, because their parents are such.

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treasure and their guide. —*Bishop Taylor.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

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1, 2. (1) **Josiah,** one whom Jehovah heals,[a] or gives: born subsequent to his father's repentance. **eight years,** so young that a sort of council of regency was necessary.[b] **Jedidah,** beloved. **Boscath,** Jos. xv. 39. (2) **way of David,**[c] ever regarded as the highest model of Jehovah-service.

Young Josiah.—Son of Amon, note his character; and observe of Josiah—I. The evil he avoided. Idolatrous practices of age he lived in. Why? He had noted, and learned a lesson from the death of his father. End of wicked people suggestive. II. The good he did. "Right;" "walked in the way of David." "Turned not aside"—perseverance. 1. Prompted public morality and religion; 2. Gave heed to his personal character and salvation (xxiii. 25). Learn—(1) Take warning fr. fate of wicked; (2) Seek not only to be but to do good.[d]

An example for royalty.—There is at the top of the Queen's staircase in Windsor Castle a statue from the studio of Baron Triqueti. of Edward VI., marking with his sceptre a passage in the Bible, which he holds in his left hand, and upon which he earnestly looks. The passage is thus concerning Josiah: "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." The statue was erected by the will of the late prince, who intended it to convey to his son the Divine principles by which the future governor of England should mould his life and reign on the throne of Great Britain.[e]

Josiah
a Gesenius.
b "There was a circle of remarkable persons in or around the palace and temple, who, poss. driven together by the recent persecutions, had formed a compact band, wh. remained unbroken till the fall of the monarchy itself."—*Stanley.*
c 2 Chr. xxxiv. 1, 2.
See *Bp. Hall, Cont.; J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* vi. 197; *T. Robinson, Spt. Char.* ii.; *R. W. Evans, Spt. Biog.; J. Williams, O. T. Char.* 264; *Kitto's Journal,* New Series, iv.
v. 2. *Bp. Wordsworth, Occ. Ser.* iv. 201.
d Hive.
e T. Hughes.

3—7. (3) **eighteenth year,** "this date applies to the last event of the reformation, the holding of the passover;"[a] ch. xxiii. 23.[b] **the scribe,** or secretary. (4) **Hilkiah,** son of Shallum, and father of Azariah.[c] **sum the silver,** collected in a similar way to that recorded 2 Ki. xii. 9, 10. (5) **doers,** or contractors, who had undertaken the repairs. **doers,** this second term may include the actual labourers. (6) **repair,** comp. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 11. (7) **faithfully,**[d] comp. ch. xii. 15.

Hearsay religion.—Now see what a hearsay religion is. There are men who believe on authority. Their minister believes all this Christianity true, therefore so do they. He calls this doctrine essential; they echo it. Some thousands of years ago men communed with God; they have heard this, and are content it should be so. They have heard with the hearing of the ear that God is love—that the ways of holiness are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. But a hearsay belief saves not. The Corinthian philosophers heard Paul—Pharisees heard Christ. How much did the ear convey? To thousands exactly nothing. He alone believes truth who feels it. He has a religion whose soul knows by experience that to serve God and know Him is the

Josiah repairs the temple
a Keil.
b Comp. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 3 — 8, xxxv. 1.
c 1 Chr. vi. 13, 14.
d 2 Chr. xxxiv. 12.
"'Tis a zealot's faith that blasts the shrines of the false god, but builds no temple to the true."—*Sydney Dobell.*

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* *F. W. Robertson.*

Hilkiah finds a copy of the law

a Kitto, Wordsworth. Comp. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 14.

b Jamieson.

c Milman.

d Ewald.

e "It had been no doubt deposited (De. xxxi. 26) by the side of the ark of the covenant, and kept ordinarily in the holy of holies. It had been lost, or secreted, during the desecration of the temple by Manasseh, but had not been removed out of the temple building." — *Spk. Com.*

f 2 Ki. xii. 9, 10.

g North of the old city.

v. 14. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 473.

Huldah, the prophetess

a "Huldah did not flatter Josiah bec. he was a king." — *Bp. Hall.*

b Spk. Com. 2 Ki. xxiii. 30.

c 2 Ki. xxiii. 29.

v. 19. *T. Cruso,* 1; *W. Enfield,* ii. 132; *R. Cecil,* iii. 49; *J. Milner,* i. 163.

vv. 19, 20. *Dr. B. Kennel,* 177; *Dr. J. A. Newman,* viii. 91.

d Roberts.

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Josiah's covenant

a De. xxxi. 10—13.

richest treasure. And unless truth come to you, not in word only, but in power besides—authoritative because true, not true because authoritative—there has been no revelation made to you from God.*e*

8—14. (8) **book of the law,** "the autograph copy of the law written by Moses."*a* "*The temple copy.*"*b* The book of Deuteronomy.*c* The whole Pentateuch.*d* **in the house,** or temple: during the disasters it was prob. secreted.*e* (9) **gathered,** emptied out, fr. the chest.*f* (10) **a book,** *v.* 8. **read it,** prob. such parts as De. xxviii. (11) **rent his clothes,** in anxiety and alarm, at the evils hanging over the land. (12) **Ahikam,** Je. xxvi. 24. **Achbor,** or *Abdon,* 2 Chr. xxxiv. 20. **Asahiah,** 2 Chr. xxxiv. 20. (13) **enquire,** of a prophet. (14) **Huldah,** a *weasel.* **wardrobe,** more prob. the palace robes, than those of the Levites. **in the college,** lit. *second part,* a suburb of Jerusalem: *Aera.*g

Discovery of a Bible.—In the year 1507, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, Luther entered into orders, and celebrated his first mass. In the same year he found, in the library of his monastery, a Latin copy of the Bible, which he eagerly read, and soon became aware that many parts of it had been kept from the people. This was the commencement of his usefulness. What a contrast do those days present to ours! If any are now without a Bible, it must be their own fault; but then it was impossible to obtain one, or to ascertain the nature and tendency of its blessed truths.—*Jewish copies of the law.*—Probably the Jews had many copies of the law, yet they were imperfect or corrupted. Hilkiah therefore rejoiced that he had found the original, by which all these might be corrected. Bishop Kennicott asserts that this was the identical copy written by Moses himself: it may have been, since scarcely a thousand years had elapsed from his decease to the days of Josiah; and we have now extant manuscripts of greater age.

15—20. (15) **the man,** an uncourtly style of speech:*a* comp. *v.* 18. (16) **words,** or threatenings. (17) **burned incense,** alluding to worship of Baal fr. small altars on the housetops. (18) **sent you,** now she gives a personal message concerning him. (19) **humbled thyself,** as *v.* 11. (20) **unto thy fathers,** "Josiah was the last king honourably buried in Jerus."*b* **in peace,** Josiah died in battle.*c* The term relates to attacks on his city, wh. were delayed till after his death.

Kindled and unquenched wrath (*v.* 17).—"Ah! who can quench the wrath of my enemy?" "Who? O, I have done it already, for his anger is turned to water." Does a person reply to another in such a way as to increase anger, it is asked. "Will ghee (clarified butter) quench fire?" "Do not cast ghee on that man's passions." "I beseech you to try to make peace for me." "Peace for you! can I quench his wrath?"*d*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—5. (1) **sent,** to call an assembly for the public reading of the law.*a* (2) **prophets,** we only know of Zephaniah, Urijah, and perhaps Jeremiah.*b* **he read,** caused to be read.*c* (3) **by**

a pillar,[d] upon the pillar, on a raised scaffold.[e] **made a covenant,** solemnly renewed the old covenant.[f] He acted as representing the people. **stood to,** agreed to. (4) **for Baal,** ch. xxi. 3—5. **Kidron,**[g] at foot of Mt. of Olives. **Bethel,** to defile therewith the idol altar in that place. (5) **put down,** stopped them fr. further sacrificing, etc.

The reformation in Judah.—Consider—I. The object of that reformation: to restore the pure religion, which God had originally instituted. Not to introduce any new religion, but simply to revive the old. II. The agents by whom it was undertaken: the king himself, the high priest, priests, officers of the court, and elders. It was effected in a quiet, orderly manner by lawful authority. III. The means by which it was effected. 1. The instruction of the people in the written Word of God; 2. The destruction of all the memorials and institutions of idolatry.[h]

Coldness in religion.—I agree with Mrs. Chapone that coldness in religion is a far more dangerous extreme than over much heat. The one may consist with real goodness; nay, may be the consequence of real goodness, commixing with a perturbed imagination, or an ill-formed judgment. But coldness can be resolved only into an absolute want of feeling. Enthusiasm is excess, but coldness is want of vitality. The enthusiast, in a moral view, is insane; which implies the possibility of recovery, and, perhaps, a partial or occasional recurrence of reason. The cold person is like the idiot in whom reason never shows itself, and where convalescence is desperate. But let it ever be remembered that he who has really found the mean between the two extremes will, and must be reckoned enthusiastic, by those who are in the extreme of coldness. You can easily conceive that when any one stands on a middle point, between two others who are, with respect to him, strictly equidistant, he must, from the inevitable laws of perspective, appear to both to be, not in the middle, but comparatively near the opposite party. He therefore must make up his mind to be censured on both sides—by the enthusiast as cold; by those who are cold as an enthusiast.[i]

6—10. (6) **grove,** *asherah,* wooden statue of Astarte.[a] **stamped it,** fr. this we must suppose it was partly stone, or coated with metal. **upon the graves,** as extreme desecration: everything connected with graves was regarded as unclean. (7) **sodomites,** 1 Ki. xiv. 24. **wove hangings,** priestesses of Astarte prepared coverings, or tents, for impure purposes. (8) **Geba,** *Jeba,* 9 m. N. of Jerus. **Beer-sheba,** S. limit of Palestine.[b] **high . . gates,** prob. two special ones at Jerus. One by Joshua's gate, and one on the left hand.[c] (9) **did eat,**[d] as unfit for office: *see* Le. xxi. 21—23. (10) **Topheth** (Jos. xv. 8, xviii. 16), *abomination:*[e] also called *Ge Hinnom;* this word corrupted into *Gehenna.*[f]

Hangings for the grove.—Very large hangings are used in the temples, some of which are fastened to the roof, others used as screens, and others to cover the sacred cars. On them are painted the actions of the gods, as described in the books Ramyanum and the Scanda Purana; and there are portrayed things of the most indecent nature.[g] In the history of Schemselouhar and the prince of Persia (*Arabian Nights' Entertainment*), when the former was told that the caliph was coming to visit her, she ordered the paintings on silk, which were in the garden, to be taken

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b There were, however, many members of the schools of the prophets.

c Keil.

d "Leaning against the pillar, at the entrance of the inner court, beside the sacred laver."—*Stanley.*

e Wordsworth.

Comp. 2 Ki. xi. 14.

f De. v. 2.

g 1 Ki. ii. 37.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.* v. 3. *C. Simeon, M.A.*, iii. 558. v. 5. *Crit. Sac. Thes.* 952.

h Bp. Perry.

i Alex. Knox.

"As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time. —*Mason.*

Josiah abolishes idolatry

a 2 Ki. xxi. 3—7.

b Ge. xxi. 31; Ju. xx. 1.

c Spk. Com.

d "They were regarded as ceremonially unclean, and as disqualified from ministering at the altar." —*Wordsworth.*

e "From Heb *tuph,* to spit out."—*Gesenius.*

f Matt. v. 22.

"Some derive fr *tôph,* a drum; bec. the cries of the sacrificed

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children were drowned in noise."—*Spk. Com.* vv. 5, 7. *Crit. Sac. Thes.* i. 534.

g Roberts.

h Burder.

Josiah destroys heathen altars

a "Heb. *parvârim:* same as *parbar*, 1 Chr. xxvi. 18; poss. same as *parvâim*, 2 Chr. iii. 6."—*Wordsworth.*

b "A chamber erected on the flat roof of one of the gateways wh. led into the temple court."—*Thenius.*

"Prob. built in order that its roof might be used for the worship of the host of heaven, for which housetops were considered specially appropriate."—*Spk. Com.*

Je. xix. 13; Zep. i. 5.

v. 11. *J. Dieteric, Ant.* 372.

c Paxton.

Josiah defiles heathen altars

a 1 Ki. xiii. 30.

vv. 17, 18. *W H. Mill.* 81.

b H. Parker.

Maurice in his *Indian Antiquities*, refers thus to the worship practised by the British Druids:—"The pen of history trembles to relate the

down. In the same manner are paintings or hangings said to be used in the passage referred to. The authority given for this custom must be allowed to be sufficient to vouch for the existence of the practice in question, to whatever animadversions the work itself may be liable in any other point of view.[b]

11—14. (11) **horses,** these were sacrificed to the sun by the Persians. **chamber,** *etc.*, wh. was turned into stable or harness-room. **suburbs,**[a] prob. in the courts. (12) **upper chamber,** prob. an erection on some part of the temple building.[b] (13) **mount of corruption,** southern part of Olivet. **Ashtoreth,** 1 Ki. xi. 5. **Chemosh,** 1 Ki. xi. 7. **Milcom,** 1 Ki. xi. 7. (14) **images,** statues. **groves,** pillar statues of wood. **bones,** so as utterly to defile them.

Horses devoted to the sun (*v.* **11**).—By those horses cannot well be understood, as the greater part of modern interpreters maintain, a number of sculptured figures of gold, silver, or brass, which had been presented as votive offerings to the heathen deity. The words of the sacred historian certainly refer to living horses, for he simply states that Josiah "took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given, or dedicated to the sun;" but had the figures of horses been intended, the clause, to correspond with the common manner of the sacred writers, must have run in these terms, He took away the horses of gold, of silver, or of brass; for in this way the molten calf of Aaron, the serpent of Moses, and the lions and oxen of Solomon, are distinguished in Scripture from the real animals. Nor had he distinguished in one statue the horses from the chariot; nor assigned to them a particular station between the temple and the house of Nathan-melech; because they were parts and appendages of the same general figure. Besides, the destruction of the horses was effected by one operation, and the chariots by another, which shows that they were not metallic figures: Josiah took away, or (as the verb is rendered in other parts) destroyed the horses, but he burned the chariots in the fire. These horses were given or dedicated to the sun, to be offered in sacrifice to that luminary, according to some writers; or kept in honour of Baal, or Apollo, as others imagine. The Jewish writers allege that the priests of the sun led them forth at the dawn, with great pomp, into a large area, between the temple and the house of Nathan-melech, to salute their god, as soon as he appeared above the horizon.[c]

15—20. (15) **at Bethel,** 1 Ki. xii. 29, xiii. 1, 2. (16) **sepulchres,** in the rocky sides of *Wady Sureinit.* **according,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. xiii. 2. (17) **title,** or pillar, used as a way-mark, or sepulchral monument. **man of God,** prophet.[a] (18) **bones alone,** regard them as sacred. (19) **high . . Samaria,** Josiah's zeal extended even into the neighbouring country. (20) **slew,** more violently treating them than those in his own land.

Lessons from an old tombstone (*v.* 17).—Look at the gravestone and learn—I. That God's servants shall be encouraged by intimations of the Divine will concerning them. II. That life must not be regarded as the boundary of the servant's usefulness. The dead parent's prayers, the dead teacher's lessons, the dead minister's sermons, all live. III. That God will reward His servants' work, and vindicate their character. IV. That here is a record of the servant's duties.[b]

Burning the dead (*v.* 16).—The pious king, in his endeavour to destroy all trace of idolatry, not only overthrew the groves, with their altars, but even burnt the remains of those who had formerly taken part in the idolatry which his father encouraged. Ezekiel (xxiv. 10), when foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, under the similitude of a boiling vessel, says, "Heap on wood, . . let the bones be burned." After the return of the Jews from captivity, the valley of Hinnom, in which they had sacrificed to Moloch, became an object of scorn and contempt. All kinds of filth, together with the bodies of malefactors, were thrown into it, where, as a sanitary precaution, fires were kept burning. Mr. Underhill, writing from India, says:—"We went aboard at daylight on the 18th, and before night had entered the channel which leads to the Sunderbunds. From a slight accident to the paddle-box at starting, we were detained two or three hours at the dock opposite to Nimtollah Ghat. It is at this place the Hindoos burn their dead. Three fires were burning during our detention. We could easily see the whole process; both men and women were engaged in performing this last rite. Around the ghat were thousands of birds, waiting with solemn mien the departure of the attendants, to pick over and devour the charred remains. The walls and houses around were covered with vultures, and dogs prowled about to share in the horrid feast." Another writer says:—"Visiting one of the Golgothas, we beheld the remains of about eighty human beings: some had just been thrown down, some were being devoured by dogs and vultures, others were being consumed on the funeral pile, and many had been reduced to ashes, or completely eaten up by dogs."

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baleful orgies which their frantic superstition celebrated, when, enclosing men, women and children in one vast wicker image in the form of a man, and filling it with every kind of combustibles, they set fire to the huge figure. While the dreadful holocaust was offering to their sanguinary gods, the groans and shrieks of the consuming victims were drowned amidst shouts of barbarous triumph; and the air was rent, as in the Syrian temple of old, with martial music."

21—25. (21) **passover,** comp. 2 Chr. xxxv. 1—19. **as it is written,** with more careful attention to the requirements of the law. (22) **such a passover,** either for attendants, or strictness of observance. (23) **in the eighteenth year,** wh. saw the completion of his reformation. (24) **familiar spirits,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxi. 6. **images,** teraphim. (25) **like,** *etc.*, see ch. xviii. 5.

Josiah proclaims a passover

vv. 21, 22 *D. W. Marks*, 236.

v. 22. *R. W. Evans*, i. 276.

v. 25. *W. Reading*, iv. 84; *C. Heurtley*, i. 241; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 527.

The character of Josiah (*v.* 25).—I. He began to serve God at a very early period of life. II. He proceeded in his career with extraordinary zeal and diligence. III. He was as zealous in promoting piety as in suppressing vice. IV. In all he did he adhered strictly to the Word of God.[a]

The multitude in Jerusalem (*v.* 22).—To those who may wonder how Jerusalem could receive such multitudes as were obliged by the Jewish law to attend there three times a year, and as we know did sometimes actually appear in it, I would recite the account that Pitts gives of Mecca, the sacred city of the Mohammedans, and the number of people he found collected together there for the celebration of their religious solemnities, in the close of the seventeenth century. This city, he tells us, he thought he might safely say had not one thousand families in it of constant inhabitants, and the buildings very mean and ordinary. The four caravans arrive there every year, with great numbers of people in each, and the Mohammedans say there meet not fewer than seventy thousand souls at these solemnities; and that though he could not think the number quite so large, yet that it is very great. How such numbers of people, with their beasts, could be lodged and entertained in such a little

[a] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"It was that gay and splendid confusion, in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false and hollow; hopes that will never be gratified, promises that will never be fulfilled, pride in the disguise of humility, and insolence in

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that of frank and generous bounty."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

"A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love."—*Bacon.*

"We mount to heaven mostly on the ruins of our cherished schemes, finding our failures were successes."—*Alcott.*

ragged town as Mecca, is a question he thus answers: "As for houseroom, the inhabitants do straighten themselves very much, in order at this time to make their market. And as for such as come last, after the town is filled, they pitch their tents without the town, and there abide until they remove towards home. As for provision, they will bring sufficient with them, except it be of flesh, which they may have at Mecca; but all other provisions, as butter, honey, oil, olives, rice, biscuit, etc., they bring with them as much as will last through the wilderness forward and backward, as well as the time they stay at Mecca; and so for their camels they bring store of provender, etc., with them." The number of Jews that assembled at Jerusalem at this passover was much greater: but had not Jerusalem been a much larger city than Mecca is, as in truth it was, yet the present Mohammedan practice of abiding under tents, and carrying their provisions and bedding with them, will easily explain how they might be accommodated. Josephus says that in one year the number of lambs slain at the passover amounted to five hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred, and that ten men at least ate of one lamb, and often many more, even to the number of twenty. Taking, therefore, the number of persons at the lowest computation, *i.e.* ten to one lamb, there must have been present this year at Jerusalem not less than two million five hundred and sixty-five thousand persons![b]

[b] *Harmer.*

the death of Josiah

26—30. (26) **provoked him,** Manasseh's crimes were the climax of the national wickedness, ch. xxi. 11—16, xxii. 17. (27) **Judah also,** as well as Israel. Judah failed to take warning fr. Israel's fall. **my name,** 2 Sa. vii. 13; 1 Ki. viii. 29, ix. 3. (28) **rest,** 2 Chr. xxxiv., xxxv. (29) **Pharaoh-nechoh,** 6th king of the 26th, or Sahidic dynasty: son of *Psammeticus.* **king of Assyria,** not certainly identified.[a] **against him,** *i.e.* the Egyptian, acting as under tribute to the Assyrians. **Megiddo,** in plain of Esdraelon.[b] (30) **own sepulchre,** ch. xxi. 18, 26.

[a] Most prob. Nabopolasar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, who had captured Nineveh, and established his kingdom at Babylon.

[b] Ju. v. 19; 1 Ki. ix. 15

The growth of evil.—Some years ago a Scotchman took with him, from inconsiderateness or strong national feelings, some Scotch thistle-seed to Australia. Accidentally, or with intention, he scattered it. In a very short time the thistle spread to such an extent, and committed such ravages among the products of cultivated lands, that an Act of Parliament was passed for its destruction. Let evil be sown in the heart or in society, in any way or from any cause, and it will rapidly grow and strengthen until the denunciations of the law and the atonement of the Gospel will be required to effect its restraint and destruction. We see in almost all lands, however cultivated, that weeds will grow more rank and rapid than serviceable vegetation. Nothing less than the total uprooting of them and the extinction of seed will prevent their growth and propagation. So moral evil springs up quicker and grows faster in all kinds of human nature, than good. Only the destruction of sin by the power of the Gospel, and constant watchfulness and diligence exercised by the grace of the same, can prevent its growth.[c]

vv. 26, 27. *Dr. T. Jackson,* xi. 337.

v. 27. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* ii. 29.

vv. 29, 30. *H. Godwin,* iii. 93.

"Little sins multiplied become great. There is nothing less than a grain of sand—there is nothing heavier than the sand of the sea when multiplied."—*T. Brooks.*

[c] *J. Bate.*

Jehoahaz

31—37. (31) **Libnah,** Jos. x. 29—32. This Jehoahaz was a younger son, *v.* 36. (32) **evil,** "he was irreligious and of impure habits."[a] (33) **at Riblah,** on the Orontes, in Syria, about

[a] *Josephus.*

2Ki. xxv. 21; Je.

25 m. S.S.W. of Emesa, now called *Ribleh*.[b] (34) **Eliakim,** or Jehoiakim.[c] **room . . father,** not recognising Jehoahaz. (35) **taxed the land,** exacting, beyond the gathered treasures, fr. the people themselves. (36) **Rumah,** either *Arumah*, Ju. ix. 41; or *Dumah*, Jos. xv. 52. "Josephus has a Rumah in Galilee."[d] (37) **evil,** comp. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 8.

The fruit of evils.—One shipwreck is worth a thousand sermons to demonstrate the instability of fortune; one death in a family is worth a thousand homilies to prove the transitoriness of earthly blessing; the hiding of our patron's countenance will sooner blanch the cheek of ambition than the tragedy of Wolsey's fall; one falsehood detected will read a better lesson upon truth; one hypocrisy uncovered, one stratagem outwitted, one crime punished in our own person, will do more to put the soul to shame and confusion, and prepare it for reason and reflection, for faith and repentance, than many sermons and many prayers.[e]

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xxxix. 5, lii. 9, 10, 26, 27.

b Wordsworth.

c "In ancient times princes were wont to give new names to the persons who entered into their service."—*Keil.*

d Spk. Com.

v. 36. *J. Mede,* ii. 1087.

e E. Irving.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

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1—7. (1) **Nebuchadnezzar,**[a] son of *Nabopolassar*, who was the founder of the Babylonian Empire. At this time associated with his father in government. **servant,** tributary. (2) **bands,** *etc.*, to harass the king until Nebuch. could deal with him in person.[b] A few regiments of Chaldees formed the nucleus of this army. **according to,** *etc.*, ch. xxiii. 27. (3) **sins,** *etc.*, ch. xxi. 11—15. **innocent blood,** ch. xxi. 16. (5) **rest,** *etc.*,[d] 2 Chr. xxvi. 6. (6) **slept,** the writer withholds reference to his sad end. His actual fate is uncertain. (7) **not again,** his power being destroyed at battle of Carchemish. **river of Eg.,** Wady-el-Arish, not the Nile.[e]

Jehoiakim subject to Nebuchadnezzar

a Also called *Nebuchadrezzar*, Je xxi. 2, 7, xxii. 25; Eze. xxvi. 7. *Nabuchodonosor*, in Berosus. Perhaps the same as *Labynetus*, in Herodotus. The original form of the name is *Nabu-Kudurri-uzur*. He reigned from B.C. 605—4, to B.C. 562—1.

b "Jehoiakim was encouraged to revolt by hope from Egypt, where a new king (Psammis) had ascended the throne."—*Kitto.*

c Je. xxv. 9, xxxii. 28.

d Je. xxii. 19, xxxvi. 30 Eze. xix. 8, 9.

e 1 Ki. viii. 65.

f Bibl. Treas.

The cry of innocent blood (*v.* 4).—I. For particulars of fact referred to, see xxi. 16 and note. II. Here we find that God is the avenger of the poor and oppressed. Let—1. The proud oppressor of the poor remember this history; 2. Let the oppressed remember of the tyrant that his day is coming.

Innocent blood (*v.* 4).—A similar statement is found in xxi. 16. And yet we are told, in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19, that Manasseh obtained pardon from God. To reconcile these, if it be necessary, we must remember that Manasseh's sin might be viewed in two aspects—as his personal trespass, and his transgression in his capacity of monarch. His individual sin was removed on his repentance and amendment, his official sin was identified with the nation. It could not be wholly removed even if the people had shown a greater penitence than they appear to have manifested, and for this reason—nations as organisations have no existence beyond the grave, and therefore God deals with them now in the way of judgment or mercy. The turning of Manasseh himself to good could not undo the evil he had perpetrated, and which rendered Israel abominable in God's sight.[f]

8—12. (8) **Jehoiachin,**[a] son of Jehoiakim, also called *Coniah*, or *Jeconiah*. **eighteen,** comp. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 9; Je. xxii. 28. **mother's name,** mentioned bec. of the part she played in the politics of the period.[b] (9) **according . . done,** adopting the same policy towards Babylon. (10) **the servants,** without

Jehoiachin submits to king of Babylon

a "Meaning, 'The Lord will esta-

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blish him.' The prophet appears to protest against the empty hypocrisy of the royal names: he takes away from the name of Jeconiah the element wh. connected him with Jehovah, and leaves him just *Coniah*." — *Wordsworth.*

b 1 Ki. xv. 10.

"Look what a little vain dust we are!"—*Addison.*

c Dr. Johnson.

he is taken a captive to Babylon

a Stanley.

b 2 Ki. xx. 17; Is. xxxix. 6. Comp. Je. xx. 5.

c "The object of carrying off these persons was twofold. 1. It deprived the conquered city of the persons most serviceable in war or siege. 2. It gave the conqueror a number of valuable assistants in the construction of his buildings and other great works." — *Spk. Com.*

d It seems to have included Ezekiel, Eze. i. 1.

"The world's a riddle, and the meaning's man." —*Holyday.*

e Fletcher.

Zedekiah (or Mattaniah)

a He turned to Egypt subsequently, 2 Ki. xxiv. 20. See 2 Chr. xxxvi. 13; Eze. xvii. 15.

b 2 Ki. xviii. 31, 36

their king who was engaged on the siege of Tyre. (11) **came against,** when it was evident that it must fall, so as to secure the honour of its conquest. (12) **went out,** surrendering himself, hoping to avoid the horrors of siege, and preserve his crown.

Homiletic hints (*v.* 8).—Jehoiachin, an illus. of a short reign and wicked one. At eighteen a king: three months after a prisoner of war (*v.* 12). Unconditional surrender of a royal family to foreign foe, an illus. of the retributive effects of sin.

The capacity of man limited.—The power, indeed, of every individual is small, and the consequence of his endeavours imperceptible, in a general prospect of the world. Providence has given no man ability to do much, that something might be left for every man to do. The business of life is carried on by a general co-operation, in which the part of any single man can be no more distinguished than the effect of a particular drop when the meadows are floated by a summer shower: yet every drop increases the inundation, and every hand adds to the happiness or misery of mankind.[c]

13—16. (13) **cut .. vessels,** "rudely hacked off the ornaments of the temple·"[a] at the former capture the movable vessels had been taken. **the Lord had said,** by Isaiah.[b] (14) **all,** except those mentioned at close of verse. **craftsmen,** artisans in wood, stone, and metal. These would be useful members of society in Babylon.[c] (15) **officers,** marg. eunuchs. **mighty,** not the same word as that in *v.* 14: this refers to persons of high civil rank.[d] **captivity,** in wh. Jeconiah lived 37 yrs. (16) **smiths,** or forgers of arms.

The poverty of the poor sometimes an advantage (*v.* 14).—I. The contrast here presented. The rich and titled, etc., led away into captivity; the poor passed over. II. The lessons hereby taught. 1. The poor should not envy the rich and wise; 2. In troublous times the poor will find their very poverty an advantage.

A hint to the rich who despise poverty (*v.* 14).—

Whatever man possesses, God has lent;
And to His audit liable is ever,
To reckon how, and where, and when he spent;
When thus thou bragg'st thou art a great receiver.
Little my debt, when little is my store,
The more thou hast, thy debt still grows the more.

But, seeing God Himself descended down,
To enrich the poor by His rich poverty;
His meat, His house, His grave, were not His own;
Yet all is His from all eternity:
Let me be like my Head, whom I adore!
Be thou great, wealthy—I still base and poor![e]

17—20. (17) **Mattaniah,** = *gift of Jehovah.* A son of Josiah. Prob. one known not to be of the Egyptian party.[a] **Zedekiah,** = *righteousness of Jehovah.* (18) **twenty and one,** comp. 1 Chr. iii. 15; 2 Ki. xxiii. 31; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 2. Fr. these passages it would seem that he must have been 34 or 35. **Hamutal,** so half-brother to Jehoiakim.[b] **Libnah,** Is. x. 29—32, 39, xii. 15. (19) **evil,** a weak man rather than a wicked one. (20) **came to pass,** that another bad king ruled.

rebelled, threw off his dependency, relying on the support of Egypt.[c]

The last king of Judah (*v.* 17).—I. His name. 1. Mattaniah—the gift of God—so called by his parents, who little thought he would ever be king: 2. Zedekiah—the justice of God—a fine exposition of the fate of Judah. II. His character. 1. Impious; 2. Impolitic. III. His fate. *See* ch. xxv.

Kings and kingdoms of Judah and Israel.—Soon after Solomon's death Ahijah's prediction (1 Ki. xi. 29—40) was verified, and the kingdom, greatly weakened by the division, formed separate kings of Judah and Israel. As the first effect of Jeroboam's religious revolt, all the priests and Levites were driven to Jerusalem (2 Chr. xi. 13, 14). "With the line of David remained God's promise of permanent kingdom, made doubly sure by its ultimate reference to the Messiah; in that family the crown was handed on, generally from father to son, while in Israel the dynasty of Jeroboam ended with his son; and there followed a series of murders and usurpations, amidst which the longest dynasties, those of Omri and Jehu, only number four or five kings each." Moral superiority of Judah noticeable. Israel given up to idolatry; Jehovah worshipped at Jerusalem. Their final fate also presents a contrast. Israel captive 130 years sooner than Judah. "And while the ten tribes never returned to their land, and only a scattered remnant of them shared the restoration of Judah, the latter became once more a small but powerful nation, not free from faults of fathers, but worshipping God with a purity and serving Him with an heroic zeal unequalled since the days of Joshua, and preparing for the restoration of the true spiritual kingdom under the last great Son of David" (*Smith*). Generally the history of the two kingdoms is divided into three periods:—1. From division to deaths of kings of Judah and Israel by hand of Jehu, B.C. 884; 2. Thence to cap. of Israel by Shalmaneser, B.C. 721; 3. History of Judah to cap. at Babylon, B.C. 586.[d]

KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

B.C.	JUDAH.	Yrs.	B.C.	ISRAEL.	Yrs.
975	1. Rehoboam	17	975	1. Jeroboam	22
957	2. Abijah	3	954	2. Nadab	2
955	3. Asa	41	953	3. Baasha	24
914	4. Jehoshaphat	25	930	4. Elah	2
889	5. Jehoram		929	5. Zimri	7ds
885	6. Ahaziah	1	925	6. Omri	
884	7. Athaliah	6	918	7. Ahab	
878	8. Joash	40	897	8. Ahaziah	2
839	9. Amaziah	29	896	9. Jehoram	12
810	10. Uzziah	52	884	10. Jehu	28
758	11. Jotham	16	856	11. Jehoahaz	17
742	12. Ahaz	16	841	12. Jehoash	16
726	13. Hezekiah	29	825	13. Jeroboam II.	41
698	14. Manasseh	55	773	14. Zechariah	6m
642	15. Amon	2	772	15. Shallum	1m
639	16. Josiah	31		16. Menahem	10
608	17. Jehoahaz	3m	761	17. Pekahiah	2
	18. Jehoiakim	11	759	18. Pekah	20
597	19. Jehoiachin	3m	730	19. Hoshea	9
	20. Zedekiah	11			

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[c] Je. xxvii. 3. xxviii. 10. xxxvii. 5; Eze. xvii. 15.

"Psammis, Necho's son, under whom the Eg. conquests in Asia had been completely lost, was succeeded by a very enterprising king, named *Hophra* (in Herodotus *Apries*). Jerusalem, wh. had always felt more drawn to Egypt than to Babylon, was the object of his special attention."—*Ewald.*

"The attempts to describe the generic character of man cannot fail to interest as well as to amuse. Here are some of them which I have been jotting down. 'Man is a two-legged animal without feathers.'—*Plato.* It is said Socrates brought a cock despoiled of his feathers into Plato's school, exclaiming, 'Behold the man of Plato!' Again, he has been called 'A laughing animal;' 'A cooking animal;' 'An animal with thumbs;' 'A lazy animal.' A travelled Frenchman being asked to name one characteristic of all the races he had visited, replied, 'Lazy!' 'A tool-making animal.'—*Dr. Franklin.* 'A cultivating animal.'—*Walker* 'A poetical animal.'—*Hazlitt.*"

[d] *Topics for Teachers.*

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Zedekiah taken a captive to Babylon

a Eze. xxiv. 1.

b Jer. lii. 4—6.

c "They escaped not by any of the regular gates, but by a passage broken through a narrow alley, confined bet. two walls, at the south-eastern corner of Jerusalem, wh. the Chald. army had not been able completely to invest."—*Stanley.*

d *Ayre.*

e Je. xxxix. 6, lii. 10.

"This was the third and last invasion of Nebuch.; he conducted it in person, at the head of an immense army, levied out of all the tributary nations under his sway." — *Jamieson.*

"Escaping apparently thro' some vaults that led into the king's garden, aided by the relaxed vigilance which the excitement of success produced in the Chaldæan host."—*Kitto.*

Ne. iii. 15.

"Man is a dupeable animal. Quacks in medicine, quacks in religion, and quacks in politics know this, and act upon that knowledge; there is scarcely any one who may not, like a trout,

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1—7. (1) **ninth,** *etc.*, "the day was revealed to Ezekiel in exile."[a] **forts,** or movable towers. (2) **eleventh year,** so lasted one year and a half.[b] (3) **famine,** occasioned by the siege being turned into blockade. (4) **broken up,** or *into*, a breach was made, this was plainly the beginning of the end. **way . . garden,**[c] comp. Je. xxxix. 2—5, lii. 4—8. **the plain,** or Arabah, lower valley of the Jordan. (5) **scattered,** by effort to secure their own safety. (6) **Riblah,** Nu. xxxiv. 11; a city on N.E. frontier of Palestine, in territory of Hamath, on the great road bet. Bab. and Judæa.[d] (7) **before his eyes,** this barbarity was specially noticed.[e] **fetters,** *lit.* two chains of brass, the one securing the hands, the other the feet.

The blind king (*v.* 7).—Trace his history and character (see last homily). Note—I. He did not make good use of sight when he had it. II. He was then morally blind. III. Had often looked on the misery of others, now beholds that of those dear to him. IV. He is deprived of sight. The last thing he saw would ever after be seen with the eye of memory. There is also a judicial blindness for those who will not see their own sinfulness, and the love of God.

Putting out the eyes (*v.* 7).—This was probably done with the intention of rendering the king incapable of ever reascending the throne. Thus it was a law in Persia down to the latest time, that no blind person could mount the throne. Hence the barbarous custom, common at the time of Chardin, and even since, of depriving the sons and male relations of a Persian king, who are not to be allowed to attain the government, of their sight. Down to the time of Abbas, who reigned in 1642, this was done, according to Chardin, only by passing a red-hot copper plate before the eyes. "But the power of vision was not so entirely destroyed, but that the person blinded still retained a glimmering; and the operation was frequently performed in so favourable a manner, that still some sight remained. During the reign of Abbas II., one of the brothers of that prince once visited his aunt and his nephew, whose palace joins the residence of the Dutch: as he expressed a wish to visit these strangers, they were informed of this, and they were invited to spend an afternoon, and take supper with them. The brother of the king brought several other blinded princes with him, and when candles were introduced, it was observed that they were aware of it. They were asked if they saw anything. The king's brother answered in the affirmative, and added, that he could see enough to walk without a stick. This was unfortunately heard by one of the court spies, who were employed to watch all the motions of the great people. According to the custom of these people, he related it to the king in a malicious manner, and so that he could not avoid being uneasy. 'How!' cried he, 'these blind people boast they can see? I shall prevent that;' and immediately he ordered their eyes to be put out in the manner before described. This is performed by entirely putting out the eyes with the point of a dagger. The Persians," continues Chardin, "consider their policy towards the children of the royal family, as humane and

laudable; since they only deprive them of their sight, and do not put them to death, as the Turks do. They say that it is allowable to deprive these princes of their sight, to secure the tranquillity of the state: but they dare not put them to death for two reasons; the first is, because the law forbids to spill innocent blood; secondly, because it might be possible that those who remained alive should die without children and if there were no other relations, the whole legitimate family would become extinct. *f*

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be 'taken by tickling.'" — *Southey.*

f *Rosenmuller.*

8—12. (8) **captain,**[a] or chief commander. (9) **burnt,**[b] that so they might be completely destroyed. **house of the Lord,** Josephus says the burning by the Rom. took place on the same day of the month. (10) **brake . . walls,** wh. they could not burn. (11) **fugitives,** persons who, foreseeing the end, had previously gone over to Nebuch. (12) **poor,** mostly people of the district, not inhabitants of the city.

Jerusalem and its sieges.—Probably no capital city of equal consequence and antiquity was ever taken and retaken so many times as Jerusalem. We have no record of the date of its foundation; yet its subsequent history is one of continual contests and continual restorations; and it is no doubt owing to these changes that the ground of the modern city is in many places thirty feet above the level of the old, and that the valleys which formerly intersected its divisions are now filled to their summits with soil and *débris.* The following are the principal sieges and conquests which the metropolis of Palestine has undergone, not including however various brief capitulations during the Maccabean and later Syrian disturbances :—Joshua (1425 B.C.), David (1048 B.C.), Shishak (974 B.C.), Joash (839 B.C.), Assyrians (771 B.C.), Pharaoh-Necho (610 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar (587 B.C.), Ptolemy Soter (320 B.C.), Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.), Pompey (63 B.C.), Crassus (54 B.C.), Herod (37 B.C.), Titus Vespasian (70 A.D.), Adrian (135 A.D.), Chosroes (614 A.D.), Heraclius (628 A.D.), Omar (Saracens) (637 A.D.), Seljouk Turks (Tutush) (1078 A.D.), Godfrey of Bouillon (1099 A.D.), Salah-ed-din (1187 A.D.), Turks (1217 A.D.), Crusaders (1229 A.D.), Turks (1244 A.D.), Selim (1517 A.D.), Bonaparte (1799 A.D.), Mahomet Ali (1832 A.D.), Turks (1840 A.D.). As there is much dispute respecting the earlier dates, they are given approximately.[c]

Jerusalem besieged and taken

a Lit., "chief of the executioners."

b Je. xxi. 10. xxiv. 2; xxviii. 18, 23.

v. 9. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* vi. 275.

Gonsalvo, surnamed the Great Captain, being asked upon his deathbed what gave him the most satisfaction during the course of his long and glorious life, replied, "that it was the consideration that he never drew his sword but in the service of his God and of his sovereign.

c *Bibl. Treas.*

13—17. (13) **pillars of brass,** 1 Ki. vii. 15—22. **bases,** 1 Ki. vii. 27—37. **brazen sea,** 1 Ki. vii. 23—26. **brass,** better read bronze.[a] (14) **pots,** *etc.*, some of these had been originally of gold,[b] others of bright brass. The gold ones had prob. been taken away when the city was first captured. (15) **firepans,** snuff-dishes. (16) **without weight,** so much that they ceased from weighing it. (17) **height,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. vii. 15—20; Je. lii. 21—23.

Assyrian siege of Jerusalem.—We may gather illustrations of the siege of Jerusalem from Ninevitish sculptures, Babylonish coins, and Egyptian monuments, in which we have abundantly represented the common Oriental methods of fortification and modes of attack prevalent in those days. We see battlemented walls and towers, with parapets, crowded with men, bow, and spear, and shield in hand, while a banner crowns the lofty keep. We have barred gates, and fosses both without and within the

the temple is pillaged

a "The breaking up of the pillars, bases, etc., shows that it was for the material, and not for the workmanship, that they were valued." — *Spk. Com.*

b 1 Ki. vii. 45, 50.

"Men might be better if we better deemed of them. The worst way to improve

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the world is to condemn it. Men may overget delusion, — not despair." — *Bailey.*

c Bibl. Treas.

walls, filled with water and crossed by bridges. Then we notice the assailants placing their scaling ladders against the fortifications, and some swimming over the ditch, to be met by a party sallying from the gates. The besiegers are provided with large shields to ward off the missiles shot from the walls. There are also testudos—large frames to cover and protect the advancing soldiers. Battering-rams are also employed. Men may be seen climbing up rocks by the aid of metal spikes; doors are being hewn down with axes; while heralds are seen coming out to treat with the enemy.[c]

the captivity of Judah

a So *Sept.*, Syr., Arab., etc.

"A priest of the second order, *i.e.* an ordinary priest."—*Keil.*

b "Prob. instigators of the people to rebellion against the Chaldæans."—*Wordsworth.*

"The things of this world, like Absalom's mule, run away and leave us when we have most need of them."—*Venning.*

c Topics for Teachers.

18—21. (18) **Seraiah,** 1 Chr. vi. 13, 14; Ezr. vii. 1. **second priest,** the Sagan, or deputy of the high priest.[a] **keepers,** *etc.*, temple Levites. (19) **an officer,** the commandant of the city. **king's presence,** as members of his council. **the principal scribe,** secretary, or adjutant of the host. **people of the land,**[b] representatives of the people. (20) **Riblah,** *v.* 6. (21) **smote them,** these being treated as representatives of the conquered people. **carried away,** and their kingdom finally broken up.

The captivities.—First captivity: Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 605) took Jerusalem (Dan. i. 1), dethroned Jehoiachim, and having directed that a number of royal and noble Hebrew youths should be trained in learning of Chaldees, Daniel and "the three children" were among those selected. Second captivity: Jerusalem again surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 598) 10,000 captives, among whom are Ezekiel, and grandfather of Mordecai (*J., Ant.* x. 6, 3; Est. ii. 56). Third captivity: Those now carried away were the gleanings of those led off with Jehoiachim. In Jeremiah (lii. 28, 30) they are called Jews, to distinguish from foreigners, etc., who shared their captivity. The difference in numbers of first captivity, and 10,000 of 2 Ki. xxiv. 14, results probably from Jeremiah not counting soldiers. The great difference between the total and those who returned may show how large were accessions from previous caps., and especially from the ten tribes.[c]

Gedaliah made governor of Judah

a Je. xxxix. 10, lii. 16.

b He had saved Jeremiah's life, see Je. xxvi. 24.

c 2 Ki. xxii. 3.

d Jos. xviii. 26.

e Ezr. ii. 22; Ne. vii. 26.

f Comp. Je. xli.—xliii.

"Were half the power that fills the world with terror, were half the wealth bestow'd on camps and courts, given to redeem the

22—26. (22) **people that remained,**[a] *v.* 12. **Gedaliah,** prob. recommended to Nebuch. by Jeremiah. **Ahikam,**[b] 2 Ki. xxii. 12. **Shaphan,** Josiah's scribe.[c] (23) **captains,** *etc.*, mentioned as *scattered*, *v.* 5. **Mizpah,**[d] now *Nebi Samwil.* **Ishmael,** a man of royal birth, *v.* 25. **Johanan,** comp. Je. xl. 13—16. **Seraiah,** *etc.*, comp. the more perfect passage, Je. xl. 8. **Netophathite,** inhabitant of Netophah, a place connected with Bethlehem.[e] **Maachathite,** De. iii. 14; Jos. xii. 5. (24) **sware,** this assurance was necessary bec. these parties had not hitherto given in their submission. (25) **smote,** *etc.*, narrated in Je. xli. 1—3. (26) **came to Egypt,** against earnest advice of Jeremiah.[f]

The captivities (*continued*).—B.C. 586—536 the Jews were captives in Babylon. This interval is marked by the history of Daniel and his companions (see Nebuchadnezzar); the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus; the siege and capture of Babylon. From B.C. 536—400 (*i.e.* from decree of Cyrus to close of Old-Testament canon) is marked by the first return (42,360 and 7,367 servants, Ezra i. 5), the founding of the temple, elevation of Mordecai, appearance of Ezra (*q.v.*); second return (6,000, end of March, B.C. 458), reformation of religion, commission of

Nehemiah (*q.v.*), completion of wall, Nehemiah's return and second commission, followed by his second reformation. "While the restored Jews were thus completing the fabric of their religion, the irregular worship of the Samaritans assumed the form of an organised schism, by the erection of a rival temple on Mount Gerizim." The precise date of its erection is doubtful, but "this much is certain, that such a temple was built as an assertion of the religious independence of the Samaritans, and that this act of schism formed the climax to the hostility between them and the Jews. The temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus (*cir.* B.C. 109). "It was to this sanctuary that the woman of Sychar referred" (Jo. iv. 20).[g]

27—30. (27) **seven and thirtieth,** B.C. 562—1. **seven and twentieth,** comp. Je. lii. 31.[a] **Evil-Merodach,**[b] so of Nebuchadnezzar. **lift up,** *etc.*, Ge. xl. 13, 20. (28) **kings,** captive kings; or vassel kings.[c] (29) **changed,** *etc.*, for robes becoming to his royalty. (30) **allowance,** enabling him to keep up some degree of royal state.[d]

Jehoiachin's daily allowance (*v.* 30).—We are all a little like this king of the olden time. We live on the daily portion that the great King of kings allows us. Foolish for us to be dissatisfied. Consider—I. The fact that we have a daily portion. Nature hints that this is all. Only enough produced to supply men's daily wants from harvest to harvest. Providence confirms the hint. Most men have to work for their living, and very few can earn more than enough for the day. A daily portion—1. Is all that any one really needs. The thirst of next June does not need to be quenched this January. To be anxious about the morrow involves us in double toil, and care in the present; and lays up disappointment for the future. Illustrates Israelites and the manna; 2. Is all that we can enjoy. We can only eat and drink one day's food in a day; and wear one suit at a time. He who is content, relieved from toil of storing and care of watching. A king once asked a poor boy what he did, and what he got for it. "I help in the stable, and get nothing but victuals and clothes." "Be content," said the king, "I have no more;" 3. It is all we should expect. Nature, providence, promises of God. prayer Jesus taught us (daily bread), teach us this. To expect more is unreasonable and ungrateful. II. Let us look at the portion itself. 1. It is our Father's allowance. He knows what we need; and what is best. His children have different portions suited to them. Some more, some less than others. We give our children different sized suits of clothes to fit them. Our heavenly Father knows what will fit our spiritual needs, better than we know the bodily needs of our little ones: 2. It is a King's allowance. Nay, "the King of kings." It is therefore sure. Consider the great King's dominion, resources, power, etc. His word is His bond. Some one blamed Alexander for giving so much to one who was unworthy. He said, "When I give, I must remember not only his deserts but my rank, and give like Alexander." A poor woman was asked if she was not surprised that God should give her so much, "No," said she, "because it's just like Him!" 3. It is a perpetually renewed portion. "All the days of his life," many or few days, each one is provided for. Learn—1. "Man doth not live by bread alone." This portion is the provision of providence. Divine grace has provided another portion. Daily

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human mind from error, there were no need of arsenals nor forts." — *Longfellow.*

g Topics for Teachers.

the last days of Jehoiachin

a "This slight variety shows that we have the evidence of two independent witnesses of the same event." — *Wordsworth.*

b Berosus calls him *Evell-maraduchus;* and says he provoked his fate by lawless government and intemperance.

c "The sovereigns of the dependencies of China are required to present themselves at court, with presents, once in 3 years." —*Huc.*

d Je. lii. 31—34.

Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39, cvi. 46; Da. xi. 34.

v. 27. This kindly feeling is said to have originated in a familiar acquaintance formed in prison, in which Evil-merodach had lain till his father's death, on account of some fault while acting as regent during his 7 yrs. illness. (Da. iv. 32, 33).

Those who have resources within themselves, who can dare to live alone, want friends the least,

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but, at the same time, best know how to prize them the most.

grace, help, blessing. This too may be ours. He will withhold no good thing, etc. Have you this portion? Martha was careful about one, Mary had chosen the other, and Jesus called it the good part; 2. If you have the portion of providence, and nothing more, you will have all your "good things in this life." He who has made provision for the less has also made provision for the greater. He who blesses the body with health, food, raiment; is willing to bless the soul with pardon, peace, holiness, heaven.[e]

A daily allowance.—The other guests were arranged round the room, according to their respective ranks: among whom was an old man, a lineal descendant of the Seffi family, whom they called Nawab, and who took his seat next to the Ameen-ad-Dowlah. Although needy and without power, he is always treated with the greatest respect (2 Sam. ix. 1, 7). He receives a daily *sursat*, or allowance, from the king, which makes his case resemble that of Jehoiachin, for his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate, all the days of his life (2 Ki. xxv. 30). Giving to the Nawab a high rank in society, is illustrative of the precedence given to Jehoiachin, by setting his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon.[f]—*Mercies remembered.*—Bishop Hutton was once travelling between Wensleydale and Ingleton, when he suddenly dismounted, delivered his horse to the care of one of his servants, and retired to a particular spot at some distance from the highway, where he knelt down, and continued for some time in prayer. On his return one of his attendants took the liberty of inquiring his reason for this singular act; when the bishop informed him that, when he was a poor boy, he travelled over that cold and bleak mountain without shoes or stockings, and that he remembered disturbing in his extremity a cow on the identical spot where he had just prayed, that he might obtain a little warmth from the place where the animal had lain. His feelings of gratitude to God for all that He had done for him would not allow him to pass the spot without presenting his thanksgivings for all His mercies. — *Be ye merciful.*—When Edward the Confessor had landed in England from Normandy to recover the kingdom, and was ready to give the Danes battle, one of his captains assured him of victory, adding, "We will not leave one Dane alive." To which Edward replied, "God forbid that the kingdom should be recovered for me, who am but one man, by the death of thousands. No, I will rather live a private life, unstained by the blood of my fellow-men, than be a king by such a sacrifice." Upon which he broke up his camp, and again retired to Normandy, until he was restored to his throne without blood.

[e] *Hive.*

[f] *Morier.*

A tree was so laden with fruit that it bent its branches to the ground, and offered it to men in handfuls. Gotthold beheld it with pleasure, praised God for the blessing and approached to take some. The force which he used shook the slender bough, and the consequence was that several dropped at his feet. "Fair tree," he exclaimed, "how generous thou art! Thou givest me more than I desire, remiud ing me thereby of the incomprehensible and unmeritedgoodness of God, which presents its blessings upon loaded branches."

The remembrance of former mercies puts an argument in the mouth of prayer, a glass to the eye of faith, and a harp in the hand of thankfulness.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

Introduction.

See general intro. at begin. of 1st bk. "The most remarkable feature in the historical books of Scripture, and especially of Kings and Chrons., is their religious, theocratic character. Secular hist. gives the public changes which nations have undergone, with their causes and results. Church hist. traces the progress of sentiment, and of various influences in relation to the Church. But here, King, Church, State, are all represented as under God. The character of each king is decided by his fidelity to the religious obligations of his office. Of each it is said, He walked in the ways of David his father and so prospered; or of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, and so failed. These books are valuable as the history of God, and His law in the nation, and that nation a monarchy; as the books of Joshua and Judges are the history of God and His law in an aristocracy or democracy; or as the earlier books are the history of God and His law in the family. In the Prophets, and in the Acts of the Apostles, we have glimpses of what is to be the history of God and His law in the world. Mark, therefore, the prominence given to the erection of the temple; the numerous references to the ancient law, especially when the two kingdoms were drawing near to their end, as if to account for their decay and approaching fall; the frequent interposition of prophets, now rebuking the people, and now braving the sovereign; the deposition and succession of kings; and the connection everywhere traced between what seem to be mere political incidents and the fidelity or idolatry of the age. Were nations wise, these records would prove their best instructors; they are adapted to teach alike the world and the Church. The genealogical tables, those to us comparatively uninteresting, were highly important among the Jews, who were made by prophetic promises extremely observant in these particulars. These tables give the sacred line through which the promise was transmitted for nearly 3,500 years; a fact itself unexampled in the history of the human race" (*Angus*).

Synopsis.

For Synopsis to Second Book see General Synopsis at beginning of First Book.

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

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Sect. 1. Death of David. Wisdom, etc., of Solomon ..... I. xxix. 23—30, II. i.

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Part IV.—HISTORY OF KINGDOM OF JUDAH FROM JEROBOAM TO ITS TERMINATION.

Sect. 1. Rehoboam ..... II. x.—xii.

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Sect. 5. Joash ..... xxiii., xxiv.

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Sect. 7. Ahaz..... xxviii.

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Sect. 9. Manasseh, Amon ..... xxxiii.

Sect. 10. Josiah ..... xxxiv., xxxv.

Sect. 11. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah; destr. of Jerusalem and temple ..... xxxvi.

Additional Note on the Authorship of the Books of Chronicles.—When Ezra and Chronicles are critically examined and analysed, the Hebrew tradition as to their authorship is very greatly strengthened and confirmed. The parts of Ezra where the writer uses the first person are admitted on all hands to have been the work of the "ready scribe" (Ezra vii. 6). But the rest of Ezra is completely homogeneous in style with these parts, and must almost certainly have proceeded from the same writer. And between Ezra and Chronicles there is so very great a resemblance that the critics who care least for tradition pronounce them the composition of the same mind. The internal evidence thus entirely confirms the external testimony; and Ezra's authorship of Chronicles may be regarded as not far short of being an established fact.—*Canon Rawlinson, M.A.*

B.C. 4004, *etc.*

Adam's posterity

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—16. (1) This list is taken fr. Ge. v. and x., and the differences in the names arise fr. a more exact reproduction of the Heb. forms.[a] (2) **Kenan**, Cainan. (3) **Henoch**, Enoch. (5—16) **sons**, *etc.*, comp. Ge. x. 2—18.

Lessons from genealogies.—Let us think—I. Of the multitudes that have gone through the world, have acted their part in it, and then quitted it. II. Of the providence of God which keeps up the generations of men, and so preserves that degenerate race, though guilty and obnoxious, in being upon earth.[b]

Proper place of man in creation.—When we reflect within what a narrow area our researches are necessarily circumscribed; when we perceive that we are bounded in space almost to the surface of the planet in which we reside, itself merely a speck in the universe, one of innumerable worlds invisible from the nearest of the fixed stars; when we recollect, too, that we are limited in point of time to a few short years of life and activity—that our records of the past history of the globe and of its inhabitants are comprised within a minute portion of the latest of the many epochs which the world has gone through; and that, with regard to the future, the most durable monuments we can raise, to hand down our names to posterity, are liable at any time to be overthrown by an earthquake, and would be obliterated as though they had never been, by any of those processes of metamorphic action which geology tells us form a part of the cycle of changes which the globe is destined to undergo,—the more lost in wonder we may be at the vast fecundity of nature, which within so narrow a sphere can crowd together phenomena so various and so imposing, the more sensible shall we become of the small proportion which our highest powers and their happiest results bear, not only to the cause of all causation, but even to other created beings, higher in the scale than ourselves, which we may conceive to exist.[c]—*The riddle of life.*—How true is that old fable of the sphinx, who sat by the wayside, propounding her riddle to the passengers, which, if they could not answer, she destroyed them! Such a sphinx is this life of ours, to all men and societies of men. Nature, like the sphinx, is of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness; the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness. There is in her a celestial beauty, which means celestial order, pliancy to wisdom; but there is also a darkness, a ferocity, a fatality, which are infernal. She is a goddess, but one not yet disimprisoned; one still half-imprisoned—the inarticulate, lovely, still encased in the inarticulate, chaotic. How true! And does she not propound her riddles to us? Of each man she asks daily, in mild voice, yet with a terrible significance. "Knowest thou the meaning of this day? What thou canst do to-day, wisely attempt to do." Nature, universe, destiny, existence, howsoever we name this grand unnamable fact in the midst of which we live and struggle, is as a heavenly bride and conquest to the wise and brave, to them who can discern her behests and do them; a destroying fiend to them who cannot. Answer her riddle, it is well with thee. Answer

a "One characteristic of the Bks. of Chron. is a marked genealogical bias, and desire to put on record the names of persons engaged in any of the events narrated." — *Spk. Com.*

M. Henry.

Starting up here and there like rugged cliffs, the genealogies claim more than a sterile grandeur; for bleak and barren though they seem, there is a well-spring at their foot. It is from these dreary crags that the fountain of Christ's manhood takes its rise; and as you follow the stream from Ur of the Chaldees to the manger of Bethlehem, you find how faithful the Promiser, and how watchful the Providence which through all the eventful centuries kept afloat, and guided on the ark of the Advent."—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

b *Prof. Daubeny.*

"It is to live twice, when you can enjoy the recollection of your former life."—*Martial.*

it not, pass on regarding it not, it will answer itself: the solution of it is a thing of teeth and claws. Nature is a dumb lioness, deaf to thy pleadings, fiercely devouring.[d]

B.C. 4004, *etc.*

d Carlyle.

17—28. (17) **Shem,**[a] his descendants are fully given, bec. with them the Bible narrative is mainly concerned. **Uz,** *etc.*, these are, in Ge. x. 23, said to be the sons of Aram. (19) **Peleg,** = *division.* (22) **Ebal,** in Ge. x. 28 *Obal.* (24—27) **Shem . . Abraham,** summarised record fr. Ge. xi. 10—26. **Shelah,** in Ge. *Salah.* (28) **sons of Abraham,** here those only are mentioned with wh. Bib. history is concerned. Keturah's family is mentioned separately.[b]

Shem's line to Abraham

a Comp. Ge. x. 22—29.

b 1 Chr. i. 32, 33.

Room in the grave for more.—But, alas! these graves are not yet full. In Reason's ear—an ear ringing ever with strange and mystic sounds—there is heard a voice from the thousand tombs, saying, "Yet there is room." The churchyard among the hills has a voice, and says, "There is room under the solitary birch which waves over me." The city cemetery has a voice, and says, "Crowded as I am, I can yet open a corner for thy dust: yet there is room." The field of battle says, "There is room: I have earth enough to cover all my slain." The depths of the ocean say, "Thousands have gone down within me; nay, one entire world has become the prey of my waters: still my caverns are not crowded, yet there is room. The heart of the earth has a voice, a hollow voice, and says, "I am empty: yet there is room." Do not all the graves thus compose one melancholy chorus, and say, "Yet there is room; room for thee, thou maiden adorned with virtue and loveliness; room for thee, thou aged man; room for thee, thou saint, as surely as there was room for thy Saviour; room for thee, thou sinner, as surely as thy kindred before thee have laid themselves and their iniquities down in the dust; room for all, for all must in us at last lie down."[c] —*The stream of life.*—Life bears us on like a stream of a mighty river. Our boat at first glides down the narrow channel, through the playful murmurings of the little brook, and the winding of the grassy borders. The trees shed their blossoms over our young heads, the flowers on the brink seem to offer themselves to our young hands; we are happy in hope, and we grasp eagerly at the beauties around us; but the stream hurries on, and still our hands are empty. Our course in youth and manhood is along a wilder and deeper flood, amid objects more striking and magnificent. We are animated at the moving pictures of enjoyment and industry passing around us; we are excited at some short-lived disappointment. The stream bears us on, and our joys and griefs are alike left behind us. We may be shipwrecked—we cannot be delayed; whether rough or smooth, the river hastens to its nome, till the roar of the ocean is in our ears. and the tossing of the waves is beneath our feet, and the land lessens from our eyes, and the floods are lifted up around us, and we take our leave of earth and its inhabitants, until of our further voyage there is no witness save the Infinite and Eternal.[d]

c Gilfillan

Emblems of life.—A dream; an eagle hasting to the prey; a flower; grass; handbreadth; a pilgrimage; a shadow; a shepherd's tent; sleep; a swift ship: a swift post; a tale told; a thread cut by the weaver; a vapour; water spilt on the ground; a weaver's shuttle; wind.—*Bowes.*

d Bp. Heber

29—42. (29) **Ishmael,** mentioned first to clear the way for giving posterity of Isaac, the child of promise. God's promise was that he should beget 12 princes.[a] **Nebaioth,** *etc.*, comp. Ge. xxv. 13—15. (30) **Hadad,** in Ge. *Hadar.* (32) **Keturah, Ge. xxv. 1. she bare,** *etc.*, Ge. xxv. 2—4. (34) **Esau,** on

posterity of Abraham

a Ge. xvii. 20.

B.C. 4004, *etc.*

the principle mentioned in note on *v.* 29, Esau's descendants are dealt with before those of Jacob. (35) **sons of Esau**, *see* Ge. xxxvi. 10—13. (36) **Zephi**, in Ge. *Zepho.* **Timna**, in Ge. xxxvi. 12, this is not a son, but concubine wife to Eliphaz. (38) **sons of Seir**, comp. Ge. xxxvi. 20, 21. (39) **Lotan**, Ge. xxxvi. 22. **Timna**, poss. same as *v.* 36, if the record in Ge. be the correct one. (40—42) **sons**, *etc.*, Ge. xxxvi. 23—28.

Changes in human society.—When one sea floweth, another ebbeth. When one star riseth, another setteth. When light is in Goshen, darkness is in Egypt. When Mordecai groweth into favour, Haman groweth out of favour. When Benjamin beginneth, Rachel endeth. Thus we are rising or setting; getting or spending; winning or losing; growing or fading, until we arrive at heaven or hell.[b]—*The perils of life.*—Go to some man now past the meridian of life, whose character and habits, with the Divine blessing, have made him honoured and successful. He was one of a band, more or less numerous, who set out in life together. They came forth from their homes and from the schoolroom, differing, perhaps, but little either in their talents or acquirements. Ask him to tell you where those his early associates are now, and what he remembers of their history. Ah! how painful the recollection and the recital! One, he will say, as he brings back the half-forgotten past, looked on the wine when it was red, and he went early to the drunkard's grave. Another yielded to the love of vain display; and after a brief career of brilliant folly and extravagance, he passed by bankruptcy to poverty, and was soon forgotten by the world. A third indulged, at first, in some trifling dishonesty, and then he was led on till he became a villain, and finally went to prison, or to an ignominious death. A fourth gave loose to sensual appetite; and then from impurity of thought and word, he went on step by step, till he suffered the miseries and met at last the fate of the worn-out profligate. A fifth was taken in the gambler's snare, and fell by suicide. A sixth—but why should I go on? So daily perish, on life's broad arena, the hopes of fathers and mothers! So sink into the depths of shame and ruin many who should have shone as brilliant stars in the galaxy of intellect—should have found a place among the noblest spirits that have ever done honour to humanity and climbed the enviable heights of fair renown. The roadside of life is all whitened with the bones of the multitudes who have fallen thus, having made, by their own missteps, an utter wreck of their hopes, their characters, and their all. With such evidence of the perils of life, can it be doubted that youth requires a guide with a friendly hand to lead them?[c]

"The great northern desert of Arabia, including the entire neck, was colonised by these tribes."—*Jamieson.*

[b] *H. Smith.*

All life is a journey, not a home; it is a road, not the country; and those transient enjoyments wh. you have in this life, lawful in their way—those incidental and evanescent pleasures which you may sip—are not home; they are little inns only upon the roadside of life, where you are refreshed for a moment, that you may take again the pilgrim's staff and journey on, seeking what is still before you — the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

How frail is human life! A thin texture of living flesh is the only screen between never-dying souls and their eternal condition.

[c] *R. Palmer.*

kings and dukes of Edom

43—54. the kings, *etc.*, comp. Ge. xxxvi. 31—43. (44) **Jobab**, is by some supposed to be the Job of the Scripture book. (51) **the dukes**, this word indicates a change in the form of government on the death of Hadad.[a]

Divineness of human nature.—With our sciences and our cyclopædias, we are apt to forget the Divineness in those laboratories of ours. We ought not to forget it! That once well forgotten, I know not what else were worth remembering! Most sciences, I think, were then a very dead thing—withered, contentious, empty—a thistle in late autumn. The best science, without this, is but as the dead timber; it is not the growing tree and forest—

[a] *Wordsworth.*

"They only have lived long who have lived virtuously." *Sheridan.*

which gives ever-new umber among other things! Man cannot know either, unless he can worship in some way. His knowledge is a pedantry and dead thistle, otherwise.[b]

B.C. 4004, *etc.*

b Carlyle.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

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1—12. (1) **Israel,** the new and permanent name given to Jacob. The order of the names is peculiar, it neither follows seniority or legitimacy. (3) **Judah,** mentioned first bec. the right of primogeniture was transferred to him.[a] **Er,** Ge. xxxviii. 7. (5) **Pharez,** Ge. xlvi. 12. (6) **sons of Zerah,** taken fr. sources unknown to us.[b] (7) **Carmi,** not previously mentioned, but a son of *Zimri.* **Achar,** same as Achan.[c] (8—12) **Ethan,** *etc.,* comp. Rev. iv. 19—22; Mat. i. 3—5. (11) **Salma,** spelt also *Salmah,* or *Salmon.*

God's dealing with sin and the sinner (*v.* 3, last clause).—I. God's estimate of sin, not man's. The judge's, not physician's, or father's, one of condemnation: not disease or misfortune; but guilt, not a thing of sentiment. II. God's treatment of sin. 1. Prompt; 2. Decided; 3. Severe; 4. Watchful. (1) The sinner a firstborn son; (2) The firstborn of Judah. Jesus, the true "firstborn of Judah," was made sin for us.[d]

Human society a circle.—Human society is a vast circle of beings on a plain, in the midst of which stands the shrine of goodness and happiness, inviting all to approach; now the attached pairs in this circle should not be continually looking on each other, but should turn their faces very often toward this central object, and as they advance they will, like radii from the circumference to the centre, continually become closer to each other, as they approximate to their mutual and ultimate object.[e]

posterity of Israel and Judah

a Ge. xlix. 8.

b "The similar names found in 1 Ki. iv. 31, are not necessarily those of the same persons." —*Wordsworth.*

c Jos. vii. 1.

v. 7. *T. Stanhope,* 3.

v. 3. "The repetition of a ver. in Genesis, in a very unlikely place, — in the midst of names and genealogies; God thus giving us to know the stress He lays on it."—*Dr Bonar.*

d Dr. Bonar.

e J. Foster.

13—17. (13) **Jesse begat,** *etc.,* 1 Sa. xvi. 10.[a] **Shimma,** Shammah, in 1 Sa.; *Shimeah,* 2 Sa. xiii. 3. (14) **Raddai,** prob. *Rei* of 1 Ki. i. 8. (16) **sisters,** by the same *mother,* not by Jesse.[b] **sons of Zeruiah,** 2 Sa. ii. 18. *Abishai* may have been eldest born. (17) **Ishmeelite,** comp. 2 Sa. xvii. 25.

Jesse's eight sons.—As it appears (1 Sa. xvi. 10, xvii. 12) that Jesse had eight sons, the presumption is, from David being mentioned here as the seventh son of his father, that one of them had died at an early age, without leaving issue.[c]—*Greatness.*—That which especially distinguishes a high order of man from a low order of man—that which constitutes human goodness, human nobleness—is surely not the degree of enlightenment with which men pursue their own advantage; but it is self-forgetfulness, it is self-sacrifice, it is the disregard of personal pleasure and personal indulgence, personal advantages remote or present.[d]

children of Jesse

a This list only gives seven sons, the *v.* in Samuel indicates that David made eight.

b 2 Sa. xvii. 25.

c Port. Com.

d Froude's Short Studies.

18—24. (18) **Caleb,** *v.* 9, *Chelubai.* **and of Jerioth,** secondary wife; the names of her children are not given. (19) **Ephrath,** *see v.* 50. (20) **Bezaleel,** the great artificer.[a] (21) **Machir,** Nu. xxvii. 1. (22) **Jair,** Nu. xxxii. 41; Ju. x. 4. (23) **took,** better, *had taken.*[b] **Geshur,**[c] N.E. region of Bashan. **Aram,** whose capital was Damascus. **Kenath,** now Kenawât, in Argob of Bashan.[d] **towers thereof,** *lit.* his daughters.[e] (24) **dead in Caleb-ephratah,** Hezron must have died in

posterity of Caleb and Hezron

a Ex. xxxi. 2, xxxv. 30, xxxvi. 1, 2, xxxvii. 1.

b "The correct rendering of this passage appears

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to be that Geshur and Aram (*i.e.* the inhabitants of those countries) took the towns of Jair from them (*i.e.* from the Manassites)." — *Bertheau.*

c De. iii. 14; Jos. xii. 5; 2 Sa. xv. 8.

d Porter.

e Nu. xxi. 25; Eze. xvi. 46.

f Spk. Com.

g Young.

Egypt, and no satisfactory explanation can be given of this statement.*f*

The greatness and littleness of man.—

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How passing wonder He who made him such!
Who centred in our make such strange extremes!
From different natures marvellously mix'd,
Connection exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied and absorpt!
Though sullied and dishonour'd, still Divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm!—a God!*g*

posterity of Jerahmeel

25—33. (25) **Jerahmeel,** *v.* 9; this genealogy is quite new. **Ahijah,** prob. the name of Jerahmeel's first wife.*a* (26) **another,** wh. seems to involve that one had been mentioned. (27—33) **and . . Jerahmeel,** merely genealogical interest attaches to these names.

a Bertheau.

"Sink not beneath imaginary sorrows; call to your aid your courage and your wisdom; think on the sudden change of human scenes; think on the various accidents of war; think on the mighty power of awful virtue; think on the Providence that guards the good." —*Johnson.*

Evil and good men.—An evil man is clay to God, wax to the devil. God may stamp him into powder or temper him anew; but none of His means can melt him. Contrariwise, a good man is God's wax, and Satan's clay; he relents at every look of God, but is not stirred at any temptation. I had rather bow than break to God; but, for Satan and the world, I had rather be broken in pieces with their violence, than suffer myself to be bowed to their obedience.*b* — *Expenditure of life.*—Life is expenditure. We have it, but are continually losing it: we have the use of it, but we are constantly wasting it. Suppose a man confined in some fortress, under the doom to stay there till death; and suppose there is there for his use a dark reservoir of water, to which it is certain none can ever be added. He knows, suppose, that the quantity is not very great; he cannot penetrate to ascertain how much, but, it may be very little. He has drawn from it by means of a fountain a good while already, and draws from it every day. But how would he feel each time of drawing, and each time of partaking of it? Not as if he had a perennial spring to go to. Not, "I have a reservoir; I may be at ease." No; but, "I had water yesterday; I have water to-day; but having had it, and my having it to-day, is the very cause that I shall not have it on some day that is approaching; and at the same time I am compelled to this fatal expenditure." So of our mortal transient life. And yet men are very indisposed to admit the plain truth that life is a thing which they are in no way other possessing than as necessarily consuming; that even in this imperfect sense of possession it becomes every day a less possession*c*.

As the arteries fill the veins with blood, so the Spirit of Christ fills the soul of the believer with a new life.

b Bp. Hall.

c J. Foster.

posterity of Sheshan

34—41. (34) **no sons,** comp. *v.* 31. (35) **gave,** *etc.*, in such a case the offspring were regarded as the descendants and heirs of the family. (36—41) **Attai . . Elishama,** none of these names are known to us.

'No man ever miscarried because his life

Eastern relation of servants.—The usages of the East differ

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very much from those of the West, with relation to the more than kind treatment of their servants; but they perfectly agree with those that are referred to in the Scriptures. How far these have been taken notice of in explaining passages of Holy Writ, I do not know; but I believe the gathering up together, and presenting them in one view to my reader, will be a sort of novelty. They marry their slaves frequently to their daughters, and that when they have no male issue, and those daughters are what we call great fortunes. That Hassan, of whom Maillet gives a long account in his eleventh letter, and who was kiaia of the Asaphs of Cairo, that is to say, the colonel of four or five thousand men who go under that name, was the slave of a predecessor in that office, the famous Kamel, and married his daughter: "for Kamel," says he, "according to the custom of the country, gave him one of his daughters in marriage, and left him, at his death, one part of the great riches he had amassed together in the course of a long and prosperous life." What Sheshan then did, was perhaps not so extraordinary as we may have imagined, but perfectly conformable to old Eastern customs, if not to the arrangements of Moses; at least it is, we see, just the same with what is now practised.[a]

was short, but because it was bad. That life is long enough that despatches the task of it."—*Herle.*

In each succeeding stage of life there is no higher wisdom than to discern the duties which belong to it.

a Harmer.

42—49. Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel, a son of Hezron, poss. by the wife *Jerioth* of *v.* 18. (42) **Mesha,** same as *Mareshah.* The last clause of this verse is confusing. Some of these names appear to belong to places rather than to persons, *father of* a name may mean *founder of a place,* or colonist who first settled a place. (49) **Achsa,** Jos. xv. 16, 17.[a]

posterity of Caleb

a Repetition of names in a family was very common.

Man the creature of progress.—Man is a creature of progress, whenever found in circumstances of civilisation. Popular institutions have an expansive principle in them. The human mind, which naturally contains this tendency, is quickened in its advancement by the social element. We believe that the species, with many reverses and retardations, has gradually improved. Its own law of progress has been resisted, but could not be utterly destroyed. It satisfies the argument to show that there never was such an amount of all that enters into the civic good of man—knowledge, law, liberty, refinement, invention, wealth—at any given period, as now subsists, since the world began. Like cross-currents of the ebb, we have beheld the contentions which would thwart this law of human progress; but as such currents only precede and indicate the turning of the tide, so now we mark the flow and predict the flood. Our plan of educating the people must agree with this noble bias and chief distinction of our nature. Far be from us the injustice and madness of withstanding such a power of development and pledge of acceleration? We may seek to guide it—to stop it is an attempt as impious as vain. The darkness of a general ignorance can never again cover the nations. The civilisation of the world can never more recede. We must treat man accordingly. We must provide him for his journey, and equip him for his race.[b]

"Content of mind springing from innocence of life, from the faithful discharge of our duty, from satisfaction of conscience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future state, is much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal possession or fruition can afford."—*Barrow.*

b Dr. Hamilton.

50—55. (50) **sons of Caleb,** poss. it should be, *the sons of Hur, the son of Caleb.* **Ephratah,** comp *v.* 19. **Kirjath-jearim,** manifestly the name of a place.[a] (51) **Beth-gader,** the Gedor of Jos. xv. 58. (52) **Haroeh,** comp. ch. iv. 2. **half,** *etc.*, *Manaheth,* a town in Judah, being part peopled by descendants of

posterity of Caleb, the son of Hur

a Jos. xv. 17.

B.C. 1752.

Shobal and Salma, *v.* 54. (53) **Ithrites,** descendants of some one named Jether. **Zareathites,** of Zareah, Jos. xix. 41. **Eshtaulites,** of *Eshtaol,* Jos. xv. 33. (54) **Netophathites,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 28, 29. **the house of,** read Ataroth-beth-Joab, as the name of a place. (55) **Jabez,** ch. iv. 9, 10. **Kenites,** Ge. xv. 19, a people mixed with tribe of Judah.[b]

Man in his unconverted and converted state.—With one object only in view—the glory of God—he lives but to promote it. In everything around him he perceives a present Deity, in every individual of his species a kinsman and a brother. His constant aim is to benefit his fellow-creature, both in a temporal and in a spiritual sense; and, in so far as he is personally concerned, to maintain "a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." If an author, his works will bear the impress of the same spirit which pervades the whole man. They may be brilliant, but they will also be useful. They may exhibit genius, but they will also manifest piety. Amusement and instruction will go hand in hand. His wit, too, is of that chaste and innocent description which can enliven the mind without injuring the heart. In short, his genius resembles the sunbeam—now glittering on the lake, now expanding the rosebud, now bringing to maturity the fruits of the earth; and thus imparting grace, and fragrance, and fertility to the landscape. While that of the unconverted is like the lightning—at one time playing majestically and harmlessly around the summit of the mountain, but at another splitting the gnarled oak, and annihilating the traveller who had taken shelter beneath it, or illuminating, by its lurid glare, the dark recesses of the cavern, and displaying objects at once disgusting to the senses and appalling to the soul.[c]

b Ex. xviii. 10—19; Nu. x. 29—32; 1 Sa. xv. 6.

"Man imperfect is—momently sinning. Evil then results from imperfection. The idea of good is owned in imperfection's lowest form. God would not, could not, make aught wholly ill, nor aught not like to err. Man never was perfect nor pure, or he would be so now. Thy nature hath some excellencies—these oft thwarted by low lusts and wicked wills. What then? They are necessitate in kind, as change in nature, or as shade to light."—*Bailey.*

c *Dr. Huie.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

B.C. *cir.* 1053, *etc.*

1—9. (1) **Amnon,** 2 Sa. iii. 2. **Daniel,** in Samuel called *Chileab.* (2) **Absalom,** 2 Sa. iii. 3. **Adonijah,** 2 Sa. iii. 4. (3) **fifth,** *etc.,* 2 Sa. iii. 4, 5. (4) **in Hebron,** 2 Sa. ii. 11, v. 5; 1 Ki. ii. 11. (5) **these,** *etc.,* comp. 2 Sa. v. 14—16; 1 Ch. xiv. 4–7. The differences are chiefly in pronunciation of names. **Bath-shua,** *Bathsheba.* (6) **Elishama,** also *Elishua.*[a] **Eliphelet,** *Elpalet.*[b] (7) **Nogah,** omitted in 2 Sa. v. (8) **Eliada,** also *Beeliada.*[c] (9) **Tamar,** 2 Sa. xiii.

the sons of David

a 1 Chr. xiv. 5.

b 1 Chr. xiv. 5.

c 1 Chr. xiv. 7.

The inventive powers of man.—The inventive powers of man are not simply limited: it is difficult to prove that he possesses aught but the talent of varying that which has been invented by the Creator, or of recombining those inventions into new groups; being thus, in reality, but a copyist. He has often attempted to design new animals; but they have ever been compounded from the parts of known ones: while, where his novelties have been greatest, the anatomist has not been able to supply the parts necessary to motion. No botanist invents a new plant but in the same manner; yet he receives from nature a hundred new inventions without the least surprise. The designer of ornaments must have recourse to the same inexhaustible source; and when he attempts to improve, he soon finds that he is compelled to return to his model and teacher. Be the painter what he may in poetic talent, he is but the transcriber of what nature has pro-

vv 9, 10. *H. Metvill,* i. 361.

"Few minds are sun-like, sources of light to themselves and to others. Many more are moons that shine with a derivative and reflected light. Among the tests to distinguish them is this: the former are always full, the latter only now and then, when their suns are shining full upon them."—*Hare.*

duced, as his excellence consists in selection and adaptation. The poet, equally, notwithstanding the prejudices in favour of his invention, is the recorder and combiner of what exists, while even his abstractions are but analyses of nature. There is but one inventor; it is the Omnipotent, who has invented all things.[d]

B.C. *cir.* 1053, *etc.*

d Macculloch.

10—16. and Solomon, *etc.*, a list of the kings of Judah, from David to Zedekiah.[a] Queen Athaliah being a usurper is not mentioned. (16) **Zedekiah his son,** properly *successor*, as Zedekiah was son of *Josiah*.

David's line to Zedekiah

a Comp. for the changes in names of the later kings, 2 Ki. xxiii. 34, xxiv. 17, 18, etc.

Moral varieties in posterity.—I. Note the words of Solomon, the head of this list, Ecc. ii. 18, 19. II. Of the kings who succeeded Solomon some were wise but most were foolish. III. Their moral character not inherited; but affected by the condition of things that grew up under their predecessors. IV. Men should remember that though they cannot determine what the moral relations of their children shall be, they may affect those relations by—1. The example they set; 2. The laws they pass; 3. The institutions they found.

v. 10. *Dr T. Horton*, 30; *W. May*, 121; *W. Butcher*, i. 154; *F. Elwin*, ii. 21; *A. Roberts*, iii. 326.

Man aided by religion.—Man has called in the friendly assistance of philosophy; and Heaven, seeing the incapacity of that to console him, has given him the aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them; and, on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short, and it will soon be over. Thus do these consolations destroy each other; for if life is a place of comfort, its shortness must be misery; and if it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus philosophy is weak, but religion comforts in a higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing for another abode. To religion, then, we must hold in every circumstance of life for our truest comforts: for if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think we can make that happiness unending; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think there is a place of rest. Thus to the fortunate religion holds out a continuance of bliss, to the wretched a change from pain.[b]

Great men stand like solitary towers in the city of God, and secret passages, running deep beneath external nature, give their thoughts intercourse with higher intelligences, wh. strengthens and consoles them, and of wh. the labourers on the surface do not even dream.

b Goldsmith.

17—24. (17) **Assir,** or the captive:[a] or a son born during his captivity, who died young.[b] **Salathiel,** adopted fr. the line of Nathan.[c] (19) **Zerubbabel,** always called the "son of Salathiel," though only so in legal, not in a natural sense.[d] (20) **five,** mentioned separately as by a different mother. (21—24) **Rephaiah,** *etc.*, "it has been alleged that the number of generations in this list is so great, that it must have extended to the time of Alexander the Great; and that consequently the Books of Chron. cannot be earlier than that time." "But *Bertheau* calculates only seven generations fr. Zerubbabel to the sons of *Elioenai:* and *Ewald* calculates only six."[e]

successors of Jeconiah

a Lightfoot; Bertheau.

b Lord A. Hervey, Wordsworth, etc. Comp. Je. xxii. 30; Mat. i. 12; Lu. iii. 28.

c "Failing Solomon's line, the inheritance passed to the next of kin, according to the Jewish law, Nu. xxvii. 8—11." —*Spk. Com.*

d Ezr. iii. 2, 8, v. 2; Ne. xii. 1; Ha, i. 1, 12, 14, ii. 2, 23; Mat. i. 12; Lu. iii. 27.

e Wordsworth.

Man lost.—We are lost as the wayfarer is lost, because we have gone away from our Father's house, and we are wandering in the wilderness—in a wilderness where there is no supply for our soul's greatest needs, where we are surrounded with perils, and whence we can of ourselves find no way to return. We are lost, as the great ship is lost; for we have made shipwreck of our best interest, and we drive without helm over the trackless sea of life;

B.C. *cir.* 1053, *etc.*

f "The only plea for assigning a later date to the Bks. of Chron. has been obtained by making the genealogy, at the close of the third chapter of the first book, consecutive, wh. any one may see, even fr. a translation, that it is not."—*Pusey.*

g Boyd. "The religious pleasure of a well-disposed mind moves gently, and therefore constantly. It does not affect by ecstasy and rapture, but is like the pleasure of health, still and sober, yet greater and stronger than when the senses make grosser impressions." —*South.*

h Sir H. Davy.

and, away from Jesus, we know no haven for which to steer. We are lost. like the guilty child that by reckless sin has broken his father's heart; for evil by nature, and worse by daily temptation and transgressions, we are left to ourselves, lost to holiness, to happiness, to heaven, to God. We have lost our birthright, lost our Father, lost our home, lost our way, lost our hope, lost our time, our souls! And what loss there is in our unimproved and unsanctified powers and faculties! How these souls are lost, in the sense that so little is made of what was meant for so much!—lost as the untilled field is lost; as the flower which no man sees is lost; as the house built, and then left empty, is lost; as the ship which rots in harbour is lost.[f]—*Life as a river.*—A full and clear river is, in my opinion, the most poetical object in nature. Pliny has, as well as I recollect, compared a river to human life. I have never read the passage in his works but have been a hundred times struck with the analogy, particularly amidst mountain scenery. The river, small and clear in its origin, gushes forth from rocks, falls into deep glens, and wantons and meanders through a wild and picturesque country, nourishing only the uncultivated tree or flower by its dew or spray. In this, in its state of infancy and youth, it may be compared to the human mind in which fancy and strength of imagination are predominant—it is more beautiful than useful. When the different rills or torrents join and descend into the plain it becomes slow and stately in its motions, and to bear upon its bosom the stately barge. In this mature state it is deep, strong, and useful. As it flows on towards the sea, it loses its force and its motion; and at last, as it were, becomes lost and mingled with the mighty abyss of waters.[h]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

B.C. 1300, *etc.*

posterity of Judah by Caleb of Hur

a Ge. xxxviii. 29, xlvi. 12.

b 1 Chr. xi. 6; not same as mentioned 1 Chr. iv. 32.

c Comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 27; 1 Chr. xi. 29.

d Sala.

Jabez

a "Future *hâphal*, from *atsab*, to grieve." — *Gesenius.*

b Ge. xxviii. 20—22.

c "Grant that the

1—8. (1) **sons of Judah,** prop. descendants, Pharez only was *son.*[a] (2) **Reaiah,** comp. *Haroeh* of ch. ii. 52. **Zorahthites,** *see* ch. ii. 53. (3) **father,** or chief. **Etam,** near Bethlehem.[b] (4) **Gedor,** ch. ii. 51. **Hushah,** not known.[c] (5) **Ashur,** ch. ii. 24. (6—8) **Coz,** not previously mentioned.

Man a servant.—It is an error to suppose that a man belongs to himself. No man does. He belongs to his wife, or his children, or his relations, or his creditors, or to society in some form or other. It is for their especial good and behalf that he lives and works, and they kindly allow him to retain a certain percentage of his gains to administer to his own pleasures or wants. He has his body, and that is all, and even for that he is answerable to society. In short, society is the master and man is the servant; and it is entirely according as society proves a good or bad master, whether he turns out a bad or a good servant.[d]

9—20. (9) **Jabez,** suddenly introduced, and without his connections being indicated. The word means *sorrowful.*[a] Poss. the Jabez of ch. ii. 55. (10) **called on,** in prayer. Comp. Jacob's vow at Bethel.[b] **coast,** or border, a prayer for temporal prosperity. **grieve me,** playing on the meaning of his name.[c] (11—14) **Charashim,**[d] artificers. Ne. xi. 35. (15—20) **Bithiah,** = *daughter of Jehovah,* seems to indicate that she became a proselyte.

Jabez (*v.* 9).—I. A concise memoir. II. Comprehensive prayer: includes—1. Best blessings; 2. Enlargement of coast; 3. Divine presence; 4. Divine support. III. The complete answer. Subject teaches us how to pray, and for what—*enlargement of coast.* Some of the analogies suggested by the sea-coast may teach us the following lessons:—1. An expanded horizon; 2. A border surface and more ample scope of water; 3. A more extended pathway. This enlarged pathway will secure for the soul—(1) Safety; (2) Peace.

The greatest man.—If I am asked who is the greatest man, I answer, the best; and if I am required to say who is the best, I reply, he that has deserved most of his fellow-creatures. Whether we deserve better of mankind by the cultivation of letters, by obscure and inglorious attainments, by intellectual pursuits calculated rather to amuse than inform, than by strenuous exertions in speaking and acting, let those consider who bury themselves in studies unproductive of any benefit to their country or fellow-citizens. I think not.[e]—*Character in life.*—

> There is a kind of character in thy life,
> That to the observer doth thy history
> Fully unfold; thyself and thy belongings
> Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
> Thyself upon thy virtues, they or thee.
> Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do,
> Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
> But to fine issues.[f]

21–23. (21) **Shelah,** Ge. xxxviii. 5. **Mareshah,** Jos. xv. 44. (22) **Chozeba,** poss. same as *Chezib,* Ge. xxxviii. 5. **ancient things,** not referring to the subjection of Moab by the later kings. (23) **potters,** employed in the plantations and enclosures of the royal demesnes; and noticed in the prophetical books.[a] **dwelt,** *etc.,* trans. *in Netaim and Gaderah,*[b] two towns belonging to Judah. **with the king,** *i.e.* on the king's property.[c]

Ancient things (*v.* 22).—I. But not utterly obliterated. Leave their mark on history, their influence on character. II. They are admonitory. III. They illustrate man's sin and God's mercy. IV. Our modern things will presently be ancient, how will they be regarded? V. The Ancient of Days is the modern Saviour. Of all things ancient, His salvation never grows out of fashion.

The works of man and of nature.—Man has never woven a tapestry like that which May spreads beneath us, in its green and flowery meadows; and where are the imitative works of art that can compete with a flower-garden—can even approach to a single flower? But we admire the imitations and almost forget to look at the reality and the original. Yet, while the former are costly, or even inaccessible, the others are given freely, without cost, and they are given freely to all. The Creator has even empowered us to create for ourselves, and almost without labour, beauty which no art can approach, and no price could teach it to rival. We sow a few seeds in a few minutes, and we become artists, under the kindness of the Great Artist, producing pictures, imperfect imitations of which we must have purchased with gold—as not all the gold of the universe could have stimulated an artist to approach to them.[d]

B.C. 1300, *etc.*

grief implied in my name may not come upon me."—*Spk. Com.*

d "Fr. *charash,* to cut."—*Gesenius.* See *Graver Thoughts of Country Parson,* 71.

"This prayer seems to have been uttered when he was entering on an important or critical service; in all probability the expulsion of the Canaanites from the territory he occupied."—*Jamieson.*

e Sir W. Jones.

"Jabez was the founder of the schools or colleges of the Scribes, mentioned 1 Chr. ii. 55."—*Wordsworth.*

f Shakespeare.

posterity of Shelah

a Je. xviii. 1, **2,** xix. 1, 2.

b Jos. xv. 36.

c For the country estates of the kings comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 25–31; 2 Chr. xxvi. 10, xxvii. 4, xxxii. 28, 29.

v. 22. "Thus writeth Ezra; who yet lived afore that Socrates taught in Athens, and afore any chronicles of the world now extant in the world. Such is the antiquity of Holy Writ."—*Trapp.*

d Macculloch.

B.C. 1300, *etc.*

posterity and cities of Simeon

a 1 Sa. xxvii. 6.

b Grove.

Life becomes useless and insipid when we have no longer either friends or enemies.

c Bp. Berkeley.

Gedor: Amalekites in Mt. Seir

a Ewald, Bertheau.

b Comp. Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

c Comp. for later existence of Amal., 1 Sa. xxvii. 8, xxx. 1; 2 Sa. viii. 12.

"The place of habitation of these park-keepers 'seems to have been near the valley of Hinnom, on the S. of Jerus., and is described by Jerome as an agreeable spot watered by the fountain of Siloam, and diversified with groves and gardens." — *Wordsworth.*

d Harmer.

B.C. 1300, *etc.*

the line of Reuben

a Ge. xlix. 10; Micah v. 2.

b Comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 30, 31; Ps. lxxxiii. 6.

"They appear to have been one of the most powerful and widely spread tribes of the Syrian desert, being found on the side

24—38. (24—27) **sons of Simeon,** comp. Ge. xlvi. 10; Ex. vi. 15; Nu. xxvi. 12—14. (28—31) **Beersheba,** *etc.*, comp. Jos. xix. 2—6. **unto reign of David,** about wh. time they appear to have lost some of them;[a] or some may have been reckoned as belonging to Judah.[b] (32, 33) **Baal,** the Baalath-beer of Jos. xix. 8. (34—38) **princes,** or chiefs of cities.

The proper training of man.—Man is an animal, formidable both from his passions and his reason; his passions often urging him to great evils, and his reason furnishing means to achieve them. To train this animal, and make him amenable to order, to inure him to a sense of justice and virtue, to withhold him from ill courses by fear, and encourage him in his duty by hopes; in short, to fashion and model him for society, hath been the aim of civil and religious institutions; and, in all times, the endeavour of good and wise men. The aptest method for attaining this end hath been always judged a proper education.[c]

39—43. (39) **Gedor,** or *Gerar.*[a] Ge. xxvi. 6—12. (40) **they of Ham,** prob. meaning Philistines, but their Hamitic descent is by no means certain. (41) **these,** *etc.*, *vv.* 35—37. Comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 8. (42) **Mount Seir,**[b] Ge. xiv. 6; De. ii. 12. (43) **rest,** *etc.*, fr. the slaughter of Saul. 1 Sa. xv. 7, 8.[c]

Right of pasturage (*vv.* 39, 40).—Our people, who are extremely watchful over their public pastures, to guard them from intruders, and so ready to go to law with their next neighbours about their right to common, or the number of beasts they shall feed there, may think it very strange that Abraham and Lot, the Kenites and Rechabites, should have been permitted to move up and down, and feed their flocks and herds unmolested, in inhabited countries as well as in deserts. But this ancient custom still continues in Palestine, which, depopulated as it is, probably has as many inhabitants in its towns, as it had in the days of Abraham. Nor is this peculiar to Palestine; there are many that live in Barbary, and other places, in the same manner. And as the Kenites and Rechabites lived in Palestine in tents, and pastured their cattle there without molestation, when the country was very populous, so Maillet assures us that great numbers of these people that live in tents come into Egypt itself to pasture their cattle, a very populous country, and indeed the Holland of the Levant.[d]

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—10. (1) **firstborn,** comp. Ge. xxxv. 22, xlix. 4. **given,** *etc.*, the double portion of firstborn was given. De. xxi. 16, 17; Jos. xvi., xvii. "The birthright as respected dignity and pre-eminence, fell to Judah." (2) **prevailed,** Ge. xlix. 8. **chief ruler,** David, we may suppose with fuller reference to the Messiah.[a] (3—6) **sons of Reuben,** Ge. xlvi. 9. **Tiglath-pileser,** 2 Ki. xv. 29. (7, 8) **when,** *etc.*, *see v.* 17. (9) **he inhabited,** *i.e.* Reuben. (10) **Hagarites,** or Ishmeelites.[b]

Dwelling in tents (*v.* 10).—The shepherds are not the only class of people that live in tents; many Orientals forsake their villages at the approach of summer, for the more airy and refreshing shelter which they afford. This custom, which may be traced to an antiquity very remote, explains, in the most satisfactory

manner, an incident in the history of Jacob. When the patriarch, in consequence of a Divine admonition, had formed the resolution to return from Mesopotamia to his father's house, he sent for Rachel and Leah to his flocks and there informed them of his design; and on their consenting to go with him, he set out upon his journey so silently, that Laban had no notice of it till the third day after his departure. It appears, however, that he carried all his effects with him, and tents for the accommodation of his family; and that Laban, who pursued him, had tents also for the use of his followers. The reason is, it was the time of sheep-shearing, when the masters and all their retainers commonly lived under tents in the open fields; and had the greater part, if not the whole of their furniture with them, on account of the entertainments which were given on these joyful occasions. Thus was Jacob equipped at once for his journey, and Laban for the pursuit. It is not more difficult to account for the intelligence not reaching Laban till the third day after Jacob's escape. Laban's flocks were in two divisions—one under the care of Jacob, the other committed to the care of Laban's sons, at the distance of three days' journey; and Jacob's own flock, under the management of his family, were, probably for the same reason, at an equal distance. Besides this, there might be other circumstances which retarded the progress of the messenger, which the sacred historian did not think it necessary to state; the fact is certain, and all the incidents of the story are natural and easy. The custom of living in tents was not confined to people in the country; persons of distinction often retired from the towns into the fields, and lived under tents during the heats of summer. Tahmasp, a Persian monarch, used to spend the winter at Casbin, and to retire in the summer three or four leagues into the country, where he lived in tents at the foot of Mount Alouvent, a place famed for its cool and pleasant retreats. His successors acted in the same manner, till the time of Abbas the Great, who removed his court to Ispahan.[d]

11—17. (11) **over against,** *etc.*, Jos. xiii. 24—28. **Bashan,** Nu. xxi. 33—35.[a] **Salcah,** De. iii. 10; Jos. xii. 5. Modern *Sulkhad*, on the southern spur of the *Jebel Hauran*. (12—15) **children,** *etc.*, *i.e.* the persons mentioned in *v.* 13. (16) **Sharon,** De. iii. 12, 13. (17) **days,** *etc.*, this indicates two occasions, one applying to the kingdom of Judah, the other to that of Israel; and the date was not the same.[b]

Man intellectually considered.—Man is made for reflection; hence all his dignity and value. His dignity consists in the right direction of his mind, and the exercise of his intellect in the study of himself, his Author, and his end. But what is the mental occupation of the world at large? Never this; but diversion, wealth, fame, power; without regard to the essential duties of intellectual man. The human intellect is most admirable in its nature; it must have strange defects to make it despicable; and, in fact, it has so many and so great, as to be supremely contemptible. How great is it in itself, how mean in its corruptions! There is in man a continual conflict between his reason and his passions. He might enjoy tranquillity to a certain extent, were he mastered by either of these singly. If he had reason without passion, or passion without reason, he might have some degree of peace; but, possessing both, he is in a state of

B.C. 1300, *etc.*

of the Euphrates in contact with the Assyrians, and also in the neighbourhood of Palestine, in contact with the Moabites and Israelites." — *Spk. Com.*

v. 1. "He might well say as Lysimachus did, when for a draught of water he had parted with his kingdom, 'Ah, for how short a (sinful) pleasure, how great privileges and blessings have I forfeited.'"—*Trapp.*

"Man is an animal that makes bargains. No other animal does this: no dog exchanges bones with another."—*Adam Smith.*

d Paxton.

chiefs and cities of Gad

a Jos. xiii. 30.

b Jeroboam reigned about B.C. 825, and Jotham about B.C. 758.

2 Ki. xiv. 16, **xv.** 32.

"Nothing unites people like companionship in intellectual enjoyment. It does more—it gives them mutual respect, and to each among them self-respect—that corner-stone of all virtue."—*Sir John Herschel.*

B.C. 1300, *etc.*

c Pascal.

perpetual warfare; for peace with one is war with the other: he is divided against himself. If it be an unnatural blindness to live without inquiring into our true constitution and condition, it proves a hardness yet more dreadful to believe in God and live in sin.[c]

census of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh

18-22. (18) **valiant men,** *sons of valour.* (19) **Hagarites,** or Hagarenes. **Jetur,**[a] **and Nephish,** comp. ch. i. 31; Ge. xxv. 15. (20) **helped,** by God: so it is suggested that Israel always did great things when they looked to Jehovah. (21) **they took,** comp. Nu. xxxi. 32—35. (22) **many slain,** intimating some almost miraculous circumstance.

a "His descendants were called *Ituræans* and the country *Auranitis*, fr. *Haouran*, its chief city."—*Jamieson.*

The best battle-cry (*v.* 20.)—I. Common battle-cries are usually—1. Shouts of defiance; 2. Personal vauntings; 3. Incitements of passion or patriotism. II. The Christian battle-cry is a cry to God in prayer. (*See* Jabez, cap. iv. and Jehoshaphat, ii., xx.)

Battle-cries.—It would be interesting, and not without instruction, could a complete list be compiled of the war-cries and military watchwords of different lands, times, and men. Since the days of King Ramirez (A.D. 939), the war-cry of the Spanish armies has been "Santiago!" of England, it used to be, "St. George! for merry England;" and of France, "Montjoye St. Denis!" "The King and Constitution!" was the war-cry of Rupert; and "The Lord of Hosts is with us!" of Cromwell. "Victory, or Westminster Abbey!" was one of Nelson's; and another of his was "England expects every man to do his duty!" In the latter part of the Sepoy rebellion, the war-cry of the British troops was, "Remember Cawnpore!"

23—26. (23) **Baal-hermon,** another name for Hermon; or same as *Baal-Gad.* *Thomson* identifies with *Suibeah*, on S. of Hermon. **Senir,** De. iii. 9. (24) **mighty men,** comp. ch. xii. 21. (25) **went,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xvii. 7. (26) **Pul,** 2 Ki. xv. 19. **Tiglath-pileser,** *v.* 6. **Halah,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xvii. 6. xviii. 11.

half-tribe of Manasseh

Famous men (*v.* 24.)—Famous men—I. May be known only by name. II. How many such have lived and died of whom not even their names are known! III. The record of the really famous is on high. IV. The best that is known of these is that they were the heads of their households.

Nobility in the antiquity of race.—A very dark complexion, as far removed from the negro swarthiness as from the bright Caucasian hue, to which the red blood coursing under the thin transparent skin gave a wonderful vivacity, finely-chiselled features, regular teeth of dazzling whiteness, jet-black pointed beard and moustaches, large lustrous swimming eyes in which many a fair lady would love to see her image reflected—all gave to his head a rare distinction. His fresh youthful voice, slim form, the delicacy of his hands and feet, his quiet elastic step, like that of a racer, all bore witness to the purity of his descent. I never felt less ashamed of acknowledging my belief in the real value of blood than when in presence of this gentleman of seventy descents, before whose nobility the sovereigns and gentry of Europe must hide their insignificant antiquity. The picturesqueness of his costume matched the beauty of his person. Over a white caftan he wore a loose cherry-coloured jubba; round his waist a Cashmere shawl, in which was stuck crosswise a large silver-sheathed curved poniard, called the jambiah; over

half-tribe of Manasseh

v. 26, Pul. "Howbeit he meant not so, neither was it in his heart to think so," viz., that God set him on. "but it was in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few (Is. x. 7)."—*Trapp.*

"Honour and shame from no condition rise; act well your part, there all the honour lies."—*Pope.*

"Whatever that be which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something

his shoulder a sabre was slung by silken cords. His head was covered by the yellow and red kufiah, which hung down behind, and was fastened to his head by a wide white muslin turban, over the sides of which the ends of the kufiah were thrown up. His feet were bare, his sandals, like those of a Roman statue, being left at the edge of the carpet. With all this, his manners were so coldly quiet, that the stiffest drawing-room in England could have found nothing in them to blame; and I confess, that when he left my room after the first meeting, I was inclined to wish that his highness had sent us some less highborn or less unbending guide.[a]

B.C 1300, *etc.*

celestial and Divine, and upon that account, must necessarily be eternal." — *Cicero.*

a Hamilton.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1300, *etc.*

1—15. (1) **sons of Levi,** these are fully presented for the sake of the returned captives; "no one was allowed to execute any sacred office who could not prove his Levitical descent."[a] (2) **Kohath,** the second son put first, bec. Aaron and the priests came fr. him.[b] (3) **Nadab,** *etc.*, Le. x. 1; Nu. iii. 4. (4—10) **Eleazar,** *etc.*, this is a list of high priests, notice is given of 2 priests bet. *Abishu* and *Eli*, viz., *Bukki* and *Uzzi*.[c] **Azariah,** the same that repelled king Uzziah;[d] Chr. xxvi. 17. (12—15) **Abitub,** *etc.*, this list is evidently defective, comp. ch. ix.

sons of Levi, and line of priests to captivity

a Wordsworth.

Ezr. ii. 61, 62; Ne. vii. 64. Ge. xlvi. 11; Ex. vi. 16.

b Ex. vi. 16, 18.

c Comp. Ezr. vii. 1—5.

Lightfoot thinks there were four priests in this interval, including *Zerahiah* and *Meraioth.*

d M. Henry.

e R. Hall.

The rights of man.—With the enemies of freedom, it is a usual artifice to represent the sovereignty of the people as a license to anarchy and disorder. But the tracing up of the civil power to that source will not diminish our obligation to obey; it only explains its reasons, and settles it on clear and determinate principles; it turns blind submission into rational obedience, tempers the passion for liberty with the love of order, and places mankind in a happy medium between the extremes of anarchy on the one side and oppression on the other; it is the polar star, that will conduct us safely over the ocean of political debate and speculation—the law of laws, the guide for legislators.[e]

Life and fame.—

Oh, Life! thou Nothing's younger brother!
So like, that one might take one for the other.
What's somebody or nobody?
In all the cobwebs of the schoolmen's trade
We no such nice distinction woven see,
As 'tis "to be," or "not to be."
Dream of a shadow! a reflection made
From the false glories of the gay reflected bow
Is a more solid thing than thou.
Vain, weak-built isthmus, which dost proudly rise
Up betwixt two eternities!
Yet canst nor wind nor wave sustain,
But broken and o'erwhelmed, the endless oceans meet again.

And with what rare intentions do we strive
Ourselves then to survive!
Wise subtle arts and such as well befit
That Nothing, man's no wit—
Some with vast costly tombs would purchase it,
And by the proofs of death pretend to live.

"The powers of the mind are like the stars, they do not always shine equally brilliant and striking; sometimes clouds may cover them for a time altogether; at other times intermittent clouds may pass over them; a heavy atmosphere at other times may affect them; seldom, in this climate, do they shine in their full glory. But, shine or no shine, the stars are still there."—*J. Bate.*

"Minds, by nature great, are conscious of their greatness, and

B.C. *cir.* 1300, *etc.*

hold it mean to borrow aught from flattery."—*Rowe.*

f Cowley.

"Here lies the great"—false marble! where?
Nothing but small and sordid dust lies there.
But oh, ye learned men! explain
What essence, what existence this,
What substance, what subsistence, what hypostasis. *f*

families of Gershom, Kohath, Merari

16—27. (16) **sons,** *etc.*, here the list is of descendants who were not high priests. (17) **Gershom**, comp. *v.* 1, eldest son of Levi. (18) **Kohath,** as *v.* 2. (19) **Merari**, Ge. xlvi. 11.[a] (20—21) **of Gershom,** comp. *vv.* 41—43. (22—27) **sons of Kohath,** other than dealt with *v.* 2. (26) **Elkanah,** father of Samuel.

The proper study for man.—

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise and rudely great;
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much greatness for the stoic's pride;
He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much;
Chaos of passion, passions all confused,
Still by himself abused or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall,
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd;
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world.[b]

28—32. (28) **Vashni,** or *Joel*, 1 Sa. viii. 2.[a] The word *Vashni* appears to mean, *and his second.* (29, 30) **Merari,** *v.* 1, 16. (31) **David set,** ch. xv. 16—24. **ark had rest,** ch. xvi. 1.[b] (32) **tabernacle,** the new one built by David for the ark in Jerusalem. **waited,** *etc.*, when the service was fully established in the temple.

Man formed for intelligence.—Man was formed with an understanding for the attainment of knowledge: and happy is he who is employed in the pursuit of it. Ignorance is in its nature unprofitable; but every kind of knowledge may be turned to use. Diligence is generally rewarded with the discovery of that which it seeks after; sometimes of that which is more valuable. Human learning, with the blessing of God upon it, introduces us to Divine wisdom; and while we study the works of nature, the God of nature will manifest Himself to us; since, to a well-tutored mind, "the heavens," without a miracle, "declare His glory, and the firmament showeth His handy-work."[c]

33—48. (33) **waited,** attending regularly on the temple service to sustain the singing. **Heman,** ch. xv. 17—19, xxv. 1—6; 1 Ki. iv. 31. **Shemuel,** or Samuel. (34—39) **brother Asaph,** not by birth, but as companion in singing. (40, 41) **Ethni,** the *Jeaterai* of *v.* 21. (42—48) **Ethan,** prob. the *Jeduthun* of 1 Chr. xvi. 42, 43, etc.

Singing with the understanding.—We are commanded to sing with the understanding; and yet if we did, four hundred and

a See also Ex. vi. 16, 19; Nu. iii. 20.

vv. 16—38. See *Kitto's Journal*, New Series, ii.

v. 22, Korah. "Howbeit his children came to good, many of them, as Elkanah, Samuel, the sons of Korah, in David's days."—*Trapp.*

"We do not commonly find men of superior sense amongst those of the highest fortune."—*Juvenal.*

b Pope.

a Comp. 1 Chr. vi. 33.

b 2 Sa. vi. 17.

"It is easy to be humble where humility is a condescension; easy to concede where we know ourselves wronged; easy to forgive where vengeance is in our power."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

c Bp. Horne.

"There are two things wh. help to make music—melody and harmony. Now, as most of you know, there is melody in music when the different sounds of the

ninety-five out of five hundred pieces of music that are published for singing would have to go to the dirt. I will defy anybody to sing with the understanding the music that is trashily printed and trashily performed, whether it be inarticulate or stringed instruments or whether it be vocalised to words. Music has a relation not simply to sensuous pleasure, which is the lowest kind of pleasure, but to imaginative pleasure, and to pleasure of the understanding as well, which it rises up round about as the atmosphere rises round about the pine trees and the oak trees on the mountain side, washing them clean, and making them stand out in majesty and beauty. Music cleanses the understanding, inspires it, and lifts it into a realm which it would not reach if it were left to itself.[a]—*Old-time music.*—The carillonus was at one time a common style of church music, particularly in Holland, before the introduction of the organ. The carillon consisted of a great number of bells, hung in the church belfry, forming a complete series or scale of tones and semitones. The carillonus, or performer, worked hard. There were pedals communicating with the bells, upon which he played with his feet, while the hands performed upon the upper species of keys, which were formed by projecting sticks wide enough apart to be struck with violence and velocity by either of the hands edgeways, without being liable to hit the adjoining keys or pins. The performer had a thick leather covering for the little finger of each hand, else he could not endure the pain caused by the percussion to the naked hand. The carillon is now out of use, the nearest approach to it being the modern peal of bells.

B.C. *cir.* 1300, *etc.*

same tune follow each other so as to give us pleasure; there is harmony in music when different sounds, instead of following each other, come at the same time so as to give us pleasure" — *C. Kingsley.*

a Beecher.

"A good ear for music and a taste for music are two very different things, which are often confounded; and so is comprehending and enjoying every object of sense and sentiment."—*Greville.*

49–53. (49) **Aaron,** *etc.*, comp. Ex. xxx. 7; Le. i. 9.[a] (50–53) **sons of Aaron,** a briefer list, similar to that in *vv.* 3–8. Poss. taken fr. another document.

office of Aaron, and his line to Ahimaaz

a Also Le. viii. 2; Nu. xviii. 1–7.

The physiology of race.—We anticipate in the doctrine of race something like that law of physiology, that, whatever bone, muscle, or essential organ is found in one healthy individual, the same part or organ may be found in or near the same place in its congener; and we look to find in the son every mental and moral property that existed in the ancestor. In race it is not the broad shoulders, or litheness, or stature, that gives advantage, but a symmetry that reaches as far as to the wit. Then the miracle and renown begin. Then first we care to examine the pedigree, and copy heedfully the training,—what food they ate, what nursing, school, and exercises they had, which resulted in this mother-wit, delicacy of thought, and robust wisdom. How came such men as King Alfred, and Roger Bacon, William of Wykeham, Walter Raleigh, Philip Sidney, Isaac Newton, William Shakespeare, George Chapman, Francis Bacon, George Herbert, Henry Vane, to exist here? What made these delicate natures? Was it the air? was it the sea? was it the parentage? For it is certain that these men are samples of their contemporaries. The hearing ear is always found close to the speaking tongue; and no genius can long or often utter anything which is not invited and gladly entertained by men around him. It is race, is it not, that puts the hundred millions of India under the dominion of a remote island in the north of Europe? Race avails much, if that be true, which is alleged, that all Celts are Catholics, and all Saxons are Protestants: that Celts love unity of power, and Saxons the representative principle. Race is a controlling in-

"A great, a good, and a right mind, is a kind of divinity lodged in flesh; and may be the blessing of a slave as well as of a prince. It came from heaven, and to heaven it must return; and it is a kind of heavenly felicity, which a pure and virtuous mind enjoys in some degree, even upon earth." — *Seneca.*

"The failure of the mind in old age is often less the result of natural decay than of disuse. Ambition has

B.C. *cir.* 1300, *etc.*

ceased to operate; contentment brings indolence; indolence, decay of mental power, *ennui*, and sometimes death. Men have been known to die, literally speaking, of disease induced by intellectual vacancy." — *Sir Benjamin Brodie.*

"The mind of a proud man is like a mushroom which starts up in a night; his business is first to forget himself, and then his friends."—*South*

b Emerson.

cities of priests and Levites

a Jos. xxi. 4—12.

b "Originally all Hebron had been given to Caleb as his inheritance (Jos. xxi. 14)."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 55. Hebron. "The six cities of refuge where the guilty might be instructed and comforted. King James was wont to say that if God did leave him to kill a man by any means, he should think God did not love him."—*Trapp.*

c J. Howe.

a Kibzaim in Jos. xxi. 22.

"Really great minds seem to

fluence in the Jew, who, for two millenniums, under every climate, has preserved the same character and employments. Race in the negro is of appalling importance. The French in Canada, cut off from all intercourse with the parent people, have held their national traits. I chanced to read Tacitus, "On the Manners of the Germans," not long since, in Missouri and the heart of Illinois, and I found abundant points of resemblance between the Germans of the Hercynian forest and our Hoosiers, Suckers, and Badgers of the American woods. But whilst race works immortally to keep its own, it is resisted by other forces. Civilisation is a reagent, and eats away the old traits. The Arabs of to-day are the Arabs of Pharaoh; but the Briton of to-day is a very different person from Cassibelaunus or Ossian. Each religious sect has its physiognomy. The Methodists have acquired a face; the Quakers a face; the nuns a face. An Englishman will pick out a dissenter by his manners. Trades and professions carve their own lines on face and form. Certain circumstances of English life are not less effective: as personal liberty; plenty of food; good ale and mutton; open market, or good wages for every kind of labour; high bribes to talent and skill; the island life, or the million opportunities and outlets for expanding and misplaced talent; readiness of combination among themselves for politics or for business; strikes, and sense of superiority founded on habit of victory in labour and in war; and the appetite for superiority grows by feeding.[b]

54—60. (54) **castles,** or fortified places.[a] **theirs was the lot,** *i.e.* the first lot. (55) **Hebron,** Jos. xxi. 11. (56) **fields,** *etc.*,[b] comp. Jos. xxi. 12. (57) **Libnah,** Jos. x. 29—32, xv. 42. **Jattir,** Jos. xv. 48. **Eshtemoa,** Jos. xv. 50. (58) **Hilen,** or *Holon*, Jos. xxi. 15. **Debir,** Jos. xv. 15. (59) **Ashan,** or *Ain*, see Jos. xix. 7, xxi. 16. **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10, xxi. 16. (60) **Geba,** Jos. xviii. 24, xxi. 17. **Alemeth,** *Almon* of Jos. xxi. 18. **Anathoth,** Jos. xxi. 18.

Man made for a future state.—Canst thou think it worth the while, that the Maker of the universe should create a soul, and send it down into the world, on purpose to superintend these trivial affairs—to keep alive a silly piece of well-figured earth while it eats and drinks, to move it to and fro in chase of shadows, to hold it up while others bow the knee and do it homage—as if it had not some higher work to mind in reference to another state? Art thou contented to live long in the world to such purposes? What low, worthless spirit is this that had rather be so employed, than in the visions of his Maker's face; that chooses thus to entertain itself on earth rather than partake the effusions of the Divine glory above; that had rather creep with worms than soar with angels; associate with brutes than with the spirits of just men made perfect? Who can solve the phenomenon, or give a rational account why there should be such a creature as man upon the earth, abstracting from the hopes of another world?[c]

61—70. (61) **left,** out of the priesthood. **ten cities,** comp. *v.* 70; Jos. xxi. 25. (62—66) Comp. Jos. xxi. (67) **cities of refuge,** Jos. xx. **Shechem,** Jos xvii. 7. **Gezer,** Jos. x. 33. (68) **Jokmeam,**[a] Jos. xii. 22. **Beth-horon,** Jos. xxi. 22. (69) **Aijalon,** here two names have fallen out: Elteke and

Gibbethon, Jos. xxi. 23. **Gath-rimmon,** Jos. xix. 45. (70) **Aner,** Jos. xxi. 25. **Bileam,** in Jos. called also *Gath-rimmon.*

The nature of man.—The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I"—ah, what words have we for such things? —is a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals Himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed? "There is but one temple in the universe," says the devout Novalis, "and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body!" This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric; but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact: the expression, in such words as can be had, of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so.[b]

B.C. *cir.* 1300, *etc.*

have cast off from their hearts the grave's earth, as well as dissipated the clouds which concealed the heaven from our view, and they thus disclose to themselves and to us a clear and blissful world of everlasting repose."—*Richter.*

b Carlyle.

71—81. (71) **Golan,** De. iv. 43. **Ashtaroth,** comp. *Beeshterah* of Jos. xxi. 27. The full name may be Beth-Ashtaroth.[a] (72) **Kedesh,** comp. *Kishon* of Jos. xxi. 28.[b] *Daberath* takes the place of *Dabareh, Ramoth* of *Jarmuth,* and *Anem* of *Engannim,* Jos. xxi. 28. 29. (74) **Mashal,** or *Mishal.* (75) **Hukok,** or *Helkath.* (76) **Hammon,** or *Hammoth-dor.* **Kirjathaim,** or *Kartan.* (77) **the rest,** of the Levites, those, viz., who were children of Merari. (78—81) **other side,** comp. Jos. xxi. 35—39.

a De. i. 4; Jos. ix. 10, xii. 4, xiii. 12, 31.

b Thompson.

The life stages of man.—

Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictur'd life; pass some few years,
Thy flowering spring, thy summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene.[b]

"Ay, they are. All creature-minds, like man's, are fallible. The seraph who in heaven highest stands may fall to ruin deepest."—*Bailey.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

B.C. 1400, *etc.*

1—5. (1) **sons of Issachar,** Ge. xlvi. 13; Nu. xxvi. 23, 24. (2) **number,** *etc.*, when the census was taken (2 Sa. xxiv. 1—9). (3) **five,** only four are found in the passage. (4) **by their generations,** the numbers being taken fr. David's census. (5) **fourscore,** *etc.*, a very large proportion of fighting men.

the sons of Issachar

v. 1. *Jashub,* alias *Job,* but not Job the patient, as some would have it.

The progress of man.—The sun does not shine brighter than it did on Adam; the ocean is not more grand now than when the old Phœnicians plied it with their oars; the birds do not sing more sweetly now than they did in the bowers of Eden. But how man progresses! Compare England now with what it was when Cæsar landed on its shore; compare the boy Newton with Sir Isaac Newton the astronomer; compare Saul of Tarsus with Paul at Athens.[a]

v. 2. "And yet this tribe, for the generality, were dull and desirous of peace."—*Trapp.*

a Dr. Thomas.

6—12. (6) **three,** comp. ch. viii. 1, 2; and Ge. xlvi. 21.[a] (7—12) **Shuppim,** *etc.*, comp. Ge. xlvi. 21; Nu. xxvi. 39, "they may have been adopted into the family of *Ir.*" **Hushim,** comp. Ge. xlvi. 23. This seems like an introduction of the family of Dan, wh. has slipped out of the text.

sons of Benjamin

a Also Nu. **xxvi.** 38.

B.C. 4004, *etc.*

"There is in some men a dispassionate neutrality of mind, which, though it generally passes for good temper, can neither gratify nor warm us: it must indeed be granted, that these men can only negatively offend; but then it should also be remembered that they cannot positively please." — *Greville.*

b J. Wesley.

sons of Naphtali and Manasseh

"The mind has no horizon; it looks beyond the eye, and seeks for mind in all it sees, or all it sees o'erruling." — *Shakespeare.*

s Mrs. King.

Man—natural, legal, and Christian.—The natural man neither fears nor loves God: one under the law, fears; one under grace, loves Him. The first has no light in the things of God, but walks in utter darkness: the second sees the painful sight of hell; the third the joyous light of heaven. He that sleeps in death hath a false peace. He that is awakened, hath no peace at all. He that believes, has true peace, the peace of God filling and ruling his heart. The heathen, baptised or unbaptised, has a fancied liberty, which is indeed licentiousness: the Jew (or one under the Jewish dispensation) is in heavy, grievous bondage; the Christian enjoys the true glorious liberty of the sons of God. An unawakened child of the devil sins willingly; one that is awakened, sins unwillingly; a child of God sinneth not but keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. To conclude: the natural man neither conquers nor fights; the man under the law fights with sin, but cannot conquer; the man under grace fights and conquers, yea, "is more than conqueror, through Him that loveth him."[b]

13—19. (15) **Zelophehad,** Nu. xxvi. 33; Jos. xvii. 3. **had daughters,** Jos. xvii. 3—6.

The appropriate qualities of woman.—Tenderness, delicacy, and gentleness are certainly the appropriate qualities of a woman; but they are more the means of virtue than virtues themselves; and if a woman satisfies herself with the mere possession of these qualities, without considering their use, she may suffer them to degenerate into faults. For instance, if her tenderness makes her helpless and useless—if it destroys her fortitude in bearing evils, and her exertion in repelling them; if her delicacy makes her whimsical, capricious, and proud; her gentleness indolent and selfish,—these qualities become vices instead of virtues. Her tenderness is the stimulus to all her benevolent and Christian duties; delicacy, her shield against the contaminating blasts of vice and vulgarity; gentleness of spirit, her guard against anxiety, and irritation in the active routine of her necessary and beneficial employments.[a]

20—29. (20) **sons of Ephraim,** Nu. xxvi. 35, 36. (21) **men of Gath,** *etc.*, settled inhabitants of the district. (22) **mourned,** comp. Ge. xxxvii. 34, 35. (23) **Beriah,** *in evil.* (24) **Beth-horon,** Jos. x. 10. **Uzzen-sherah,** not certainly known, perhaps *Beit-sira*, 3 m. S.W. of nether Beth-horon.[a] (25—27) **Ammihud,** Nu. i. 10. **Non,** or Nun. "The descent of Joshua is only traced fr. these personages here."[b] (28, 29) **their possessions,** Jos. xvi. 1—3.

sons of Ephraim

a Grove.

b Spk. Com.

v. 20. "The Ephraimites were famous for their wealth, power, and prowess; but withal they were noted for being insolent, proud and quarrelsome (Jud viii. 1, *cf.* xii. 1)."—*Trapp.*

"Narrow minds think nothing right that is above their own capacity." — *La Rochefoucauld.*

The grandeur of man.—The grandeur of man's nature turns to insignificance all outward distinctions. His powers of intellect, of conscience, of love, of knowing God, of perceiving the beautiful, of acting on his own mind, on outward nature, and on his fellow-creatures—these are glorious prerogatives. Through the vulgar error of undervaluing what is common, we are apt, indeed, to pass these by as of but little worth. But as in the outward creation, so in the soul, the common is the most precious. Science and art may invent splendid modes of illuminating the apartments of the opulent, but these are all poor and worthless compared with the light which the sun sends into our windows, which he pours freely, impartially, over hill and valley, which

kindles daily the eastern and western sky; and so the common lights of reason, and conscience, and love, are of more worth and dignity than the rare endowments which give celebrity to a few.[c]

30—40. (30) **sons of Asher,** Ge. xlvi. 17.[a] (31) **Birzavith,**[b] name of a place, but unknown. (32) **Shomer,** *Shamer* in *v.* 34. **Hotham,** *Helem* in *v.* 35. (33—40) **the number,** reckoned at David's census.

Man the consummation of creation.—Man, for whom all things were made, was himself made last of all. We are taught to follow the heavenly Artist, step by step, first in the production of the inanimate elements, next of vegetable, and then of animal life, till we come to the masterpiece of Creation—man, endued with reason and intellect. The house being built, its inhabitant appeared: the feast being set forth, the guest was introduced: the theatre being decorated and illuminated, the spectator was admitted to behold the splendid and magnificent scenery in the heavens above, and the earth beneath; to view the bodies around him, moving in perfect harmony, and every creature performing the part allotted it in the universal drama; that seeing, he might understand, and understanding, adore, its Supreme Author and Director.[c]—*Human life.*—This life is a season of probation, assigned to us for the purpose of making our choice between everlasting happiness or misery. This life, considered as it is in itself, is an object of contempt. We may say of it, with the sacred writer, that it is a shadow that passeth away—a vanity which has nothing real or solid—a flower which fadeth—grass which withereth and is cut down—a vapour which dissolves into air—a dream which leaves no trace after the sleep is gone—a thought which presents itself to the mind, but abideth not—an apparition—a nothing before God. But when we contemplate this life in its relation to the great end which God proposes to Himself in bestowing it upon us, let us form exalted ideas of it: let us carefully compute all its subdivisions; let us husband with scrupulous attention all the instants of it, even the most minute and imperceptible; let us regret the precious moments which we have irrecoverably lost. For this shadow which passeth, this vanity which hath nothing real or solid, this flower which fadeth, this grass which is cut down and withereth, this vapour which melteth into air, this forgotten dream, this transient thought, this apparition destitute of body and substance, this nothing, this span of life so vile and contemptible,—is time which we must redeem, a time of visitation which we must know, a time accepted; a day of salvation which we must improve, a period of forbearance and long-suffering which we must embrace, a time beyond which there shall be time no longer, because after life is finished, tears are unavailing, sighs impotent, prayers are disregarded, and repentance is ineffectual.[d]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—11. (1) **Benjamin,** already treated, ch. vii. 6—12. Reintroduced for the sake of supplementary particulars, and for sake of association with Saul the first king. **Aharah,** comp. Ahiram of Nu. xxvi. 38.[a] (2—5) **Addar,** or *Ard*, Ge. xlvi. 21; **Nu.** xxvi. 40. **Naaman,** Nu. xxvi. 40. (6) **Ehud,** some think

B.C. 1400, *etc.*

c W. E. Channing.

sons of Asher

a Comp. Nu. xxvi. 44.

b "Meaning *the well of the olive trees.*"—*Gesenius.* "The sovereign good of man is a mind that subjects all things to itself, and is itself subject to nothing; such a man's pleasures are modest and reserved, and it may be a question whether he goes to heaven, or heaven comes to him: for a good man is influenced by God Himself, and has a kind of divinity within him."—*Seneca*

c Bp. Horne.

"Whence comes it to pass that we have so much patience with those who are maimed in body, and so little with those who are defective in mind? It is because the cripple acknowledges that we have the use of our legs; whereas the fool obstinately maintains that we are the persons who halt in understanding. Without this difference in the case, neither object would move our resentment, but both our compassion."—*Pascal.*

d Saurin.

B.C. 1400, *etc.*

sons and chiefs of Benjamin

a Comp. also *Ehi* of Ge. xlvi. 21.

B.C. 1400, *etc.*

b Ju. iii. 15.

c "The names here and in ch. vii. 10 are not the same in the Hebrew." —*Spk. Com.*

d Jos. xxi. 17; 1 Sa. xiii. 3.

e Wordsworth.

f Dr. Chalmers.

the judge of this name is meant.[b] *Spk. Com.* says it is a prob. corruption of the Abihud of *v.* 3.[c] **Geba,** Jos. xviii. 24, there called *Gaba.*[d] **Manhahath,** not identified. See marg. of Ju. xx. 43.[e] (7) **Gera,** the leader of the migration. (8) **sent them away,** refer. is prob. to divorcing of his wives. (9—11) **Hodesh,** the Moabitish wife, who replaced the divorced ones.

Man a missionary.—Every man is a missionary now and for ever, for good or for evil, whether he intends or designs it or not. He may be a blot, radiating his dark influence outward to the very circumference of society; or he may be a blessing, spreading benediction over the length and breadth of the world, but a blank he cannot be. There are no moral blanks; there are no neutral characters. We are either the sower that sows and corrupts, or the light that splendidly illuminates, and the salt that silently operates; but being dead or alive every man speaks.[f]

a Ayre.

See Ezr. ii. 33; Ne. vii. 37.

b Ac. ix. 32.

c "Aijalon is the modern *Yalo*, on a long hill, about 14 m. fr. Jerus., on the S. side of a broad fertile valley, called *Merj-Ibn-Omeir.*" —*Ayre.*

d 1 Chr. ix. 3; Ne. xi. 4.

e Beecher.

12—28. (12) **Ono,** near Lydda. Poss. the modern *Kefr 'Ana.*[a] **Lod,** *Lydda,* or Diospolis.[b] (13) **Aijalon,**[c] in Joshua's time belonged to Dan. Jos. xix. 42. Afterwards it belonged to Ephraim, 1 Chr. vi. 66—69. Ultimately it was reckoned with Benjamin. (14—28) **dwelt at Jerusalem,** this was not till after the return from captivity.[d]

Manufacture of man.—Many pray to be made "men in Christ Jesus," and think in some miraculous way t will be given to them: but God says, "I will try My child, and see if he is sincere;" and so He lays a burden upon him, and says, "Now stand up under it; for thus you are to grow strong." He sends a provocation, and says to him, "Be patient." He throws him into perplexities, and says, "Where now are thy resources?" If the ambitious ore dreads the furnace, the forge, the anvil, the rasp, and the file, it should never desire to be made a sword. Man is the iron, and God is the smith; and we are always either in the forge or on the anvil. God is shaping us for higher things.[e]

Gibeon

a 1 Sa. x. 26, xiii. 2, 15, xv. 34.

b Comp. 1 Chr. ix. 36.

"What a chimera is man! what a confused chaos! a professed judge of all things, and yet a feeble worm of the earth! the great depositary and guardian of the truth, and yet a mere huddle of uncertainty! the glory and the scandal of the universe."—*Pascal.*

29—32. (29) **Gibeon,**[a] Jos. ix. 3—27, mod. *El Jib.* **father of,** meaning the founder of, or ruler of. For name Jehiel, *see* ch. ix. 35. (30) **Baal and Nadab,** bet. these it appears that Ner should be inserted.[b] (31) **Zacher,** or Zechariah. (32) **Shimeah,** *Shimeam,* ch. ix. 38. **in Jerus.,** *see v.* 28.

Opposite neighbours (*v.* 32).—Opposite neighbours are—I. Often the objects of supreme indifference. II. Sometimes of prying curiosity. III. Should always be of brotherly and religious concern.

Who is my neighbour?—

Thy neighbour? It is he whom thou
Hast power to aid and bless,
Whose aching heart or burning brow
Thy soothing hand may press.

Thy neighbour? 'Tis the fainting poor,
Whose eye with want is dim,
Whom hunger sends from door to door—
Go thou and succour him.

Thy neighbour? 'Tis that weary man,
Whose years are at their brim,
Bent low with sickness, cares, and pain—
Go thou and comfort him.

Thy neighbour? 'Tis the heart bereft
Of every earthly gem;
Widow and orphan, helpless left—
Go thou and succour them.

Whene'er thou meet'st a human form,
Less favoured than thine own,
Remember 'tis thy neighbour worm,
Thy brother or thy son.

Oh! pass not, pass not heedless by;
Perhaps thou canst redeem
The breaking heart from misery—
Go, share thy lot with him.[c]

B.C. 1400, *etc.*

"A lively and agreeable man has not only the merit of liveliness and agreeableness himself, but that also of awakening them in others." — *Greville.*

c Montgomery.

33—40. (33) **Ner,** *etc.*, comp. genealogy in 1 Sa. ix. 1; xiv. 50, 51. **Abinadab,** pos. the same as *Ishui.*[a] **Esh-baal,** or *Ish-bosheth.*[b] (34) **Merib-baal,** or Mephibosheth.[c] (35—39) **sons,** *etc.*, comp. ch. ix. 41—44. (40) **archers,** lit. *treading the bow:* bending it, by putting the foot on it, wh. is done when the bow is large and strong.[d]

house of Kish

a 1 Sa. xiv. 49.

b 2 Sa. ii. 8.

c 2 Sa. ix. 12.

d Gesenius.

The sons of Ulam (*v.* 40).—I. A wonderful family—1. For number; 2. Valour; 3. Skill, see note, *supra.* II. For what are our families distinguished? III. For what ought they to be famous, taking into account their advantages?

Enthusiasm of man.—It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's heaven as a God-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest day-drudge kindles into a hero. They wrong man greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the allurements that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations. Not happiness, but something higher; one sees this even in the frivolous classes, with their "point of honour" and the like. Not by flattering our appetites; no, by awakening the heroic that slumbers in every heart, can any religion gain followers.[e]

"Great strength as well as skill was requisite in ancient archery, as the bow, wh. was of steel, was bent by treading with the foot, and pulling the string with both hands." — *Jamieson.*

e Carlyle.

Personification of war.—

Lastly, stood War, in glittering arms yclad,
With visage grim, stern look, and blackly hued;
In his right hand a naked sword he had,
That to the hilts was all with blood imbrued;
And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued),
Famine and fire he held, and there withal,
He razèd towns, and threw down towers and all.
Cities he sack'd and realms (that whilom flower'd
In honour, glory, and rule above the rest)
He overwhelm'd, and all their fame devour'd,
Consumed, destroy'd, wasted and never ceased,
Till he their wealth, their name and all oppress'd;
His face forehew'd with wounds, and by his side
There hung his targe, with gashes deep and wide.[f]

"See where the giant on the mountain stands, his blood-red tresses deepening in the sun, with death shot glowing in his fiery hands, and eye that scorches all it glares upon." — *Byron.*

f Sackville.

War.—What a fine-looking thing is war! Yet dress it as we may, dress and feather it, daub it with gold, huzza it, and sing swaggering songs about it, what is it, nine times out of ten, but murder in uniform![g]

"The worse the man the better the soldier; if soldiers be not corrupt, they ought to be made so."—*Napoleon.*

g Jerrold.

B.C. 1200, *etc.*

Israel's and Judah's genealogies

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—9. (1) **book of the kings,** not the books of the Bible that are so called, but a summary made on the return fr. Babylon.[a] **who were carried,** specially refers to Judah. (2) **first inhabitants,** of the return fr. captivity.[b] **the Israelites,** prob. meaning the mass of the people, both fr. the ten tribes and the two. **Nethinims,** the inferior attendants of the sanctuary.[c] (3) **in Jerus.,** *etc.*, comp. Neh. xi. 4—19. (4—9) **Uthai . . fathers,** comp. same list in Neh. xi.

The purpose and cause of the captivity (*v.* 1).—I. The human view of the captivity. In searching out the reason, men might point to broken treaties, number and strength of enemy, etc. II. The Divine view: "For their transgressions;" their captivity a punishment. III. Sin leads men into captivity.

Early history of man.—

Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked, and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, upon the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and angels to His sight appeared,
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise,
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sat and talked
With winged messengers, who daily brought,
To his small island in th' ethereal deep,
Tidings of joy and love. From these pure heights
Fell human kind—to banishment condemned,
That flowing years repeal'd not, and distress
And grief spread wide; but man escaped the doom
Of destitution—solitude was not.
Jehovah, formless Power, above all powers,
Single and one, the omnipotent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven—
On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark,
Or out of Sion, thundering from His throne
Between the cherubim—in the chosen race
Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
Judgments that filled the land from age to age
With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear,
And with amazement smote - thereby to assert
His scorned or unacknowledged sovereignty.[d]

10—16. (10, 11) **Azariah,** called by Neh. *Seraiah.* **ruler,** *etc.*, prob. refers to *Ahitub*, ch. vi. 11.[e] (12, 13) **brethren,** *etc.*, comp. Ne. xi. 12—14. **able men,** or mighty in valour. The work was one needing soldierly qualities. (14—16) **Levites,** Ne. xi. 15—18.

Able men for the work of the house of God (*v.* 13).—Consider—I. The nature of the work referred to—essentially spiritual. II. The kinds of work to be done. 1. Religious teaching; 2. Sacred worship; 3. Material support. III. The need always of able men in all departments of the work. Pastors and preachers—singers, etc.—deacons, churchwardens, etc. IV. To secure able

a Comp. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 18.

b The first return was under Zerubbabel and Joshua (B.C. 535), then that of Ezra (B.C. 457), and of Nehemiah (B.C. 444).

c A name only used after the exile.

Man was originally created for good, and to do good only; in his new birth, he is re-created on the same principle.

"Man was the highest note in the scale of creation, and when he descended, through all nature there followed a corresponding reduction."—*Trench.*

"Every man is a volume, if you know how to read him."—*W. Ellery Channing.*

d *Wordsworth.*

Priests and Levites

e "The high priest at time of return under Zerub. was Joshua (Ezr. iii. 2; Hag. i. 1; Zec. iii. 1—8, vi. 11—13)." — *Wordsworth.*

Sir Thomas More, while a

men the church should give heed to training, to election of men. The great need is spirituality of heart and mind.

The seraph within man.—Krummacher gives the legend of Adam reposing under a tree, looking up into heaven, and longing for wings that he might soar to the stars. Then a seraph touched him, and a deep sleep fell upon him, and he dreamed; and it seemed to him he flew up into heaven. But when he awoke he found he was still reclining under the tree. Then he said to the seraph, "Behold! I flew up to the vault of the sky: radiant worlds like the sun rushed past me, and still worlds on worlds were beyond. Didst thou indeed guide me yonder?" But the seraph answered, "This tree has overshadowed thee, and thy body has rested on this hill. But, behold, Adam! within thee dwells a seraph, who is able to rise to these glorious worlds, and who, the higher he soareth, bendeth the knee in deeper humility before Jehovah. Son of earth! prize and guard this seraph, that worldly lusts paralyse not his flight, to chain him to the earth." The seraph spake thus, and disappeared.

17—26. (17) **porters,** whose duty it was to guard entrances to the temple. (18) **hitherto waited,** or *who to this day waits.*[a] **companies,** lit. *camps.*[b] (19) **gates,** *lit.* thresholds, or inner doors of the temple.[c] **tabernacle,** either another word for temple, or temporary shelter for ark while the second temple was building. (20) **Phinehas,** Nu. iii. 32. **in time past,** or in presence of the Lord.[d] (21, 22) **reckoned,** registered. **villages,** round Jerus., in which they resided. **seer,** 1 Sa. ix. 9. (24) **four quarters,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 14—16. (25) **after seven days,** a weekly course of Levites and porters as of priests. (26) **four chief porters,** these were permanent officials residing at Jerusalem.

Porters and door-keepers of the house of God.—I. They filled an honourable and important position. II. They were tried men (see *v.* 18). III. Much of the comfort and order of the worship depend on their duty being well done. IV. In our day, door-keepers, etc., should respect their work, and be honoured for their work's sake.

The king's gate.—This gate was so called because Solomon built it and the rest of the wall on that side, at an extraordinary trouble and expense, raising the foundation four hundred cubits, or seven hundred and twenty-nine feet seven inches from the bottom of the deep valley of Kidron, by means of large stones, twenty cubits, or thirty-six feet five inches long, and six cubits, or ten feet ten inches high, so as to be on an equality with the rest of the surface. When Captain Light visited Jerusalem, in 1814, some of these large stones seem to have been remaining, for when describing the Turkish aga's house, which is built on the spot where the house of Pontius Pilate formerly stood, he says, "What attracted my observation most, were three or four layers of immense stones, apparently of the ancient town, forming part of the walls of the palace." The ancients delighted in building with these large kinds of stones, for in the ruins which we have of ancient buildings, they are often to be found of great magnitude. Mr. Wood, in his *Ruins of Palmyra and Balbec*, states that "the stones which compose the sloping wall of the latter are enormous: some are from twenty-eight to thirty-five feet long, and nine feet high. There are three of the following

B.C. 1200, *etc.*

prisoner in the Tower, would not suffer himself to be trimmed, saying, "There was a controversy between the king and him for his head; and till that was at a happy end he would be at no cost about it." The first work of man should be to settle the controversy between himself and God concerning his soul.

porters and gate-keepers

a "Whereas Shallum had originally the general superintendence of the gates, a change had been made when the author wrote, and Shallum's charge had become the east gate only."—*Spk. Com.*

b "According to the ancient mode of speech, in wh. the Levites were regarded as soldiers keeping watch and ward about the palace of Jehovah (Nu. i. 50—53, iv. 3—15)." — *Wordsworth.*

c 2 Chr. xxiii. 4.

d So LXX. and Vulg.

"Some lives are forgeries. They give out that they are epistles of Christ, while they are not."—*Arnot.*

"Man is the metre of all things, the hand

B.C. 1200, *etc.*

is the instrument of instruments, and the mind is the form of forms."—*Aristotle.*

"Clocks will go as they are set; but man, irregular man's never constant, never certain."—*Massinger.*

e Sir R. K. Porter.

dimensions: fifty-eight feet high, and twelve thick: they are of white granite, with large shining flakes like gypsum." At Bagdad, the gate Al Talism is "now bricked up, in honour of its having been entered in triumph by the Sultan Murad, after his having recovered Bagdad from the Persians, and the weak grasp of the unworthy son of the great Abbas. In consequence of this signal event, the portal was instantly closed on the victor having marched through, and from that day has never been reopened. This custom of shutting up any passage that has been peculiarly honoured, that it may not be profaned by vulgar footsteps, appears to have prevailed very generally over the East. I found an instance of it at Ispahan, where the Ali Copi gate is, in like manner, held sacred for a similar reason."[e]

the singers, etc.

27—34. (27) **round about,** prob. within the temple-courts. **the opening thereof,** lit. *they were over the key.*[a] (28) **by tale,**[b] or number, counting them before and after use. (29, 30) **spices,** *etc.*, various articles required for the service, such as incense, etc. (31) **made in the pans,** the minchah, or meat-offering.[c] (32) **shew bread,** Ex. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5, 6. (33) **free,** from all other duties except supervision. (34) **throughout their generations,** certain families kept certain offices in the line of their descendants.

a Ju. iii. 25; Is. xxii. 22.

b Tale, A.S. *talu,* fr. *telian, tellan,* to tell.

c Le. ii. 5, 6, vi. 14.

Homiletic hints (*v.* 33).—I. As mercy did not cease to rule either by day or by night, so music did not hush its holy ministry. II. God's praise is constant in heaven, and should be on earth. III. The Lord always deserves to be praised for what He is in Himself, and for His works—especially for redemption. IV. Have we not something to sing about at this moment?[d]

d Spurgeon.

Calvin, even in his dying illness, would not refrain from his labours; but when his friends endeavoured to persuade him to moderate his exertions he replied, "What! shall my Lord come and find me idle?"

The industry of Calvin.—What shall I speak of his [Calvin's] indefatigable industry, almost beyond the power of nature; which, paralleled with our loitering, will, I fear, exceed all credit! It may be the truest object of admiration, how one lean, worn, spent, and wearied body could hold out. He read every week of the year through, three divinity lectures; every other week, over and above, he preached every day: so that (as Erasmus said of Chrysostom) I know not whether more to admire his constancy or theirs that heard him. Some have reckoned his yearly lectures to be one hundred and eighty-six, and his yearly sermons two hundred and eighty-six. Every Thursday he sat in the presbytery. Every Friday, when the ministers met to consult upon difficult texts, he made as good as a lecture. Besides all this, there was scarcely a day that exercised him not in answering, either by word of mouth or writing, the doubts and questions of different churches and pastors; so that he might say with Paul, "The care of all the churches lieth upon me." Scarcely a year passed, wherein, over and above all these employments, some great volume, in folio or other size, came not forth.[e]

"He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again!"—*Shakespeare.*

e Dr. Hoyle.

Gibeon, Kish, Saul, etc.

35—44. (35) **Jehiel,** *see* ch. viii. 29. (36) **Ner,** omitted ch. viii. 30. (37, 38) **and Nadab,** *etc.*, comp. ch. viii. 31, 32. (39—44) **and Ner,** *etc.*, comp. ch. viii. 33—38.

"His life was gentle, and the elements so mix'd in him, that Nature

Charm in opening manhood.—There is a charm in opening manhood which has commended itself to the imagination in every age. The undefined hopes and promises of the future—the dawning strength of intellect—the vigorous flow of passion—

the very exchange of home ties and protected joys for free and manly pleasures, give to this period an interest and excitement unfelt, perhaps, at any other. It is the beginning of life in the sense of independent and self-supporting action. Hitherto life has been to boys, as to girls, a derivative and independent existence—a sucker from the parent growth—a home discipline of authority and guidance, and communicated impulse. But henceforth it is a transplanted growth of its own—a new and free power of activity—in which the mainspring is no longer authority or law from without, but principle or opinion from within. The shoot which has been nourished under the shelter of the parent stem, and bent according to its inclination, is transferred to the open world, where of its own impulse and character it must take root, and grow into strength or sink into weakness and vice. There is a natural pleasure in such a change. The sense of freedom is always joyful, at least at first. The mere consciousness of awakening powers and prospective work touches with elation the youthful breast. But to every right-hearted youth this time must also be one of severe trial. Anxiety must greatly dash its pleasure. There must be regrets behind and uncertainties before. The thought of home must excite a pang even in the first moments of freedom. Its glad shelter—its kindly guidance—its very restraints, how dear and tender must they seem in parting! How brightly must they shine in the retrospect as the youth turns from them to the hardened and unfamiliar face of the world! With what a sweet, sadly-cheering pathos must they linger in the memory! And then what chance and hazard is there in his newly-gotten freedom! What instincts of warning in its very novelty and dim inexperience! What possibilities of failure as well as of success in the unknown future, as it stretches before him![a]

B.C. 1200, *etc.*

might stand up and say to all the world, this was a man."—*Shakespeare.*

"The best thing corrupted is worst: an ill man is the worst of all creatures; an ill Christian, the worst of all men; an ill professor, the worst of all Christians; an ill minister, the worst of all professors."—*Bp. Hall.*

"Man is greater than a world, than systems of worlds; there is more mystery in the union of soul with the physical than in the creation of a universe."—*Henry Giles.*

a Dr. Tulloch.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

B.C. 1056.

overthrow and death of Saul

1—7. (1) **Philistines,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Sa. xxxi. 1—6; 2 Sa. i. 9, 10. **slain,** or wounded, a proportion only actually killed. **Gilboa,** 1 Sa. xxviii. 4. (2) **Abinadab,** or Ishui. (3) **archers,** who pursued the fugitives. **wounded,** better he trembled,[a] fearing the archers; and committed suicide in his terror. (4) **abuse me,** he feared a prolonged and violent death. (5) **the sword,** *i.e.* his own, not Saul's. (6) **all his house,** except Ishbosheth.[b] (7) **forsook their cities,** comp. 1 Sa. xxxi. 7.

Hit by the archers (*v.* 3).—I. Saul may be regarded as a type of those engaged in the battle of life. II. The battle went sore against him, because God withdrew His aid. III. The archers may be taken as illustrations of those who with tongue, pen, influence, etc., shoot at the man against whom the battle prevails.

Suicide.—

> This Roman resolution of self-murder
> Will not hold water at the high tribunal,
> When it comes to be argued; my good genius
> Prompts me to this consideration. He
> That kills himself t' avoid misery, fears it;
> And at the best shows a bastard valour.

a Keil, *Bertheau, Gesenius.*

b "It appears that Ishbosheth and Mephibosheth were kept at Gibeah on account of their youth."—*Jamieson.*

"O deaf to nature and to heaven's command against thyself to lift the murdering hand! O damn'd despair!—to shun the living light, and plunge thy guilty soul in

B.C. 1056.

endless night!" —*Lucretius.*

[c] *Massinger.*

This life's a fort committed to my trust,
Which I must not yield up till it be forced;
Nor will I: he's not valiant that dares die;
But he that boldly bears calamity.[c]

the burial of Saul

8—14. (8) **strip,** *etc.*, the armour formed valuable part of the victor's spoils. (9, 10) **stripped,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Sa. xxxi. 9, 10. (11) **Jabesh-gilead,**[a] Ju. xxi. 8—14; 1 Sa. xi. 1—11. (12) **buried their bones,** after burning the bodies. **oak,** Sam. says *tree.*[b] (13) **for his transgression,** esp. refer. to sin of sparing Amalek.[c] **asking,** *etc.*, consummating his wickedness by turning to witch of Endor. (14) **turned the kingdom,**[d] *etc.*, the reference to Saul is only made as introduction to the reign of David.

[a] 1 Sa. xxxi. 11—13.

[b] 1 Sa. xxxi. 13.

[c] 1 Sa. xv. 1—9.

[d] "Because of unrighteous dealings, the kingdom is turned from one people to another" (Ecclus. x. 8).

The head of Saul in the temple of Dagon (*v.* 10).—I. It was once above the head of his brethren, now in Dagon's temple as a trophy. II. Dagon's worshippers knew not why it was there; not by help of Dagon, but abandonment of God. III. Note the shame to which Israel's chosen leaders may come. IV. If that head had devised schemes for God's glory it had not now become a ghastly trophy in Dagon's temple.

Tidings sent to the idols (*v.* 9).—After Saul had fallen on Mount Gilboa, his enemies "stripped him, and took off his head, and sent the tidings to their idols." When the heathen of the present day gain a victory over their enemies, they always take the tidings to their idols. There is the king, and there his general and troops and priests and people marching in triumph to the temple. Then they relate to the gods all their proceedings; how they conquered the foe, and that to them they have come to give the glory. But this practice is had recourse to, also, in the common affairs of life. A man delivered from prison, or any great emergency, always goes to his gods to carry the joyful tidings. Hear them relate the story: "Ah! Swamy, you know Muttoo wanted to ruin me; he therefore forged a deed in my name, and tried to get my estates; but I resisted him, and it has just been decided before the court that he is guilty. I am therefore come to praise you, O Swamy!"[e]

[e] *Roberts.*

"Ther is ful many a man that crieth 'werre, werre,' that wot ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his bygynnyng hath so greet an entre and so large, that every wight may entre when him liketh, and lightly fynde werre; but certes what ende schal falle therof, it is not lightly to knowe. For sothly whan that werre is oones bygonne, ther is ful many a child unbore of his mooder that schal sterve yong, bycause of thilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe, and deye in wreechidness; and therefore er that eny werre be bygonne, men moste have gret counseil and gret deliberacioun."—*Chaucer.*

"To despise our own species is

A war trophy.—Great excitement has been caused among the Germans in Titusville, Pennsylvania, by the arrival of a bronze 18-pounder field piece, seven feet eight inches in length, five inches bore, and weighing 1,944lb., presented to the German Protestant Church of that city for bell metal by the Emperor of Germany. It cost when new about 4,000 dollars, and is worth at least 2,000 dollars for old metal. On the breech is engraved "Bourges, July 27, 1869," indicating the place and date of its manufacture. In front of the touch-hole is the letter "N.," surmounted by the Imperial Crown of France. The name of the gun, "Le Mauvais," is carved on the muzzle. The battle of Sedan was the first service into which the gun was brought, but it was not fired during the battle. Four fine lithographs accompany the gun. The first is a copy of King William's reply to Napoleon's declaration of war, on the margin of which are representations of the principal battles of the war, also pictures of the heroes of Germany. The other pictures represent the battle of Gravelotte, the battle of Sedan, etc., all of which are framed and executed in the highest style of art. It is satisfactory to hear that the gun, by kind permission of the Mayor, is to be

fired on some of the hills surrounding Titusville, by "experienced artillerists," before it is made into bells. It seems rather hard that a gun should have passed through the battle of Sedan without being once fired off, and then be shipped off to America to summon a Pennsylvanian congregation to a chapel. Perhaps there will be a tone of bitterness in the jingle of the bells into which it is to be converted.*f*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

B.C. 1056.

1—3. (1) **all Israel,** *etc.*, at death of Ishbosheth, *see* 2 Sa. v. 1—3. **Hebron,** Ge. xxiii. 2. (2) **moreover,** *etc.*, two things are here urged on Dav., the eye of the people had long been on him, and he was especially called and anointed of Jehovah. (3) **covenant,** as 2 Sa. v. 3. **anointed David,** for the third time.

Israel's commissariat-general (*v.* 2).—David's commission. I. What it implies. 1. God's care for Israel; 2. God's view of a king's duty; 3. That Israel had not been well fed of late. II. How David discharged it. 1. By securing peace, by victorious wars. he provided for the ingathering of fruits of the earth; 2. By attention to religious affairs he provided for spiritual food of his people; 3. He himself spread a table, **in the Bk. of Ps.,** for the souls of men.

The mission of man.—

How I wish
I could love men! for amid all life's quests
There seems but worthy one—to do men **good.**
It matters not how long we live, but how.
For as the parts of one manhood while here
We live in every age: we think, and feel,
And feed upon the coming and the gone
As much as on the now time. Man is one:
And he hath one great heart. It is thus we **feel,**
With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,
Each other's rights and wrongs; thus are we **men.**
Let us think less of men and more of God.
Sometimes the thought comes swiftening over **us,**
Like a small bird winging the still blue air;
And then again, at other times, it rises,
Slow, like a cloud which scales the skies all breathless,
And just overhead lets itself down on us.*a*

the price we must too often pay for a knowledge of it."—*Colton.*

f American Paper.

B.C. 1043.

David made king in Hebron

On *v.* 1 see *Dr. Kennicott, State of the Heb. Text*, i. 19.

If an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity; but perhaps a cripple in a poor-house, whom the parish wish dead, but humbled before God, with far lower thoughts of himself than others think of him.

"Man is a central creature between the animals, that is to say, the most perfect form, which unites the traits of all in the most complete epitome."—*Herder.*

a Bailey.

4—9. (4) **Jebus,** the ancient name of city when associated with the Jebusites. (5) **castle,** or stronghold. (6) **David said,** only a portion of the narrative given (2 Sa. v. 8) is repeated here. **Joab,** *etc.*, a most important addition to Sam.'s account. (7) **city of David,** or *Zion.* (8) **built the city,** prob. a new town to the north of the old one. **Joab repaired,**[a] or restored the old city of the Jebusites. (9) **waxed greater,** 2 Sa. v. 10.

David's prosperity (*v.* 9).—I. What is here stated of David. He increased in power, influence, followers. II. How this prosperity is accounted for. 1. Not his own sagacity, valour, etc.; 2. But the presence and blessing of God: 3. This Divine help did not cause David to neglect the use of means—measures and men.

The true freedom of man.—The free man is he who is loyal to the laws of his universe; who in his heart sees and knows, across

David takes the castle of Zion

a 1 Ki. xviii. 30; Ne. iv. 2.

"Our Heavenly Father, in His boundless goodness, has made His creatures that they should be happy, and in His wisdom has fitted His means to His ends, giv-

B.C. 1048.

ing to all of them different qualities and faculties, in using and developing which they fulfil their destiny, and, running their uniform course according to His prescription, they find that happiness which He has intended for them." — *Prince Albert.*

Stanley's Sin. and Pal. 171, 173.

"Man is the jewel of God, who has created this material world to keep His treasure in." —*Theodore Parker.*

b Carlyle.

all contradictions, that injustice cannot befall him here; that, except by sloth and cowardly falsity, evil is not possible here. The first symptom of such a man is not that he resists and rebels, but that he obeys. As poor Henry Marten wrote in Chepstow Castle long ago,

> "Reader, if thou an oft-told tale wilt trust.
> Thou'lt gladly do and suffer what thou must."

Gladly: he that will go gladly to his labour and his suffering, it is to him alone that the upper powers are favourable and the field of time will yield fruit. "An oft-told tale," friend Harry; all the noble of this world have known it, and in various dialects have striven to let us know it! The essence of all "religion" that was and that will be, is to make men free. Who is he that, in this life-pilgrimage, will consecrate himself, at all hazards, to obey God and God's servants, and to disobey the devil and his? With pious valour this free man walks through the roaring tumults invincibly, the way whither he is bound. To him in the waste Saharas, through the grim solitudes peopled by galvanised corpses and doleful creatures, there is a lodestar; and his path, whatever those of others be, is towards the Eternal. A man well worth consulting, and taking the vote of about matters temporal; and, properly, the only kind of man.[b]

David's mighty men

10—14. (10) **chief,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 8—39. **mighty men,** *gibborim*, or heroes. **strengthened,** better *exerted*, "*strenuously assisted* with all Israel in making David king."[a] (11) **Hachmonite,** or Son of Hachmoni.[b] **captains,** Heb. *shaloshim*, or thirty.[c] (12) **three mighties,** the third being *Shammah*.[d] (13) **Pas-dammim,** or *Ephes-dammim*.[e] **barley,** *lentils* in 2 Sa. xxiii. 11. (14) **they set,** better, "he, Shammah, set, or stood."

David's mighty men (*v.* 10).—I. Their history in relation to themselves. Their purpose and work to make David king, "according to the word of the Lord." For this they fought, not thinking of self. II. The lesson of their history for us. Our great work to maintain the throne of our King—David's royal Son.

Brave boys.—In the war with France, previous to the Revolution, an English drummer, not more than fifteen years of age, having wandered from his camp too near the French lines, was seized and brought before the French commander. On being asked who he was by the general, he answered, "A drummer in the English service." This not gaining credit, a drum was sent for, and he was desired to beat a couple of marches, which he accordingly did. The Frenchman's suspicion being, however, not quite removed, he desired the drummer to beat a retreat. "A retreat, sir?" replied the youthful Briton: "I don't know what that is." This answer so pleased the French officer that he dismissed the drummer, and wrote to his general, commending his spirited behaviour.*f*

War conclusive of all crime.—

> By how all minor cruelties of man
> Are summed in war, conclusive of all crimes!
> How is it Christian nations boast of war,
> When not defensive, indefensible?

a Spk. Com.

b 1 Chr. xxvii. 2.

c LXX., Vulg., Syr., Arab.

Shalishim would be captains.

d 2 Sa. xxiii. 11.

e 1 Sa. xvii. 1.

"There are but three classes of men: *the retrograde, the stationary*, and *the progressive*."—*Lavater*

f Percy Anec.

"Through the gloom were seen ten thousand banners rise into the air, with orient colours waving: with them rose a forest huge of spears, and thronging helms appear'd, and serried shields in thick array,

How boast to steep the earth in brother blood
Deeper than heathen? Doth not current time
Show deadliest wit at work how most to slay?
Scan earth, and mark the myriads massed in arms
Scowling defiant hate; burning to reave
Each other of domain, state, power; or prove
The dominance of race! What hosts arrayed
In battailous pomp meet, east and west, the eye!
More than now, never hath the world beheld.
Not that so vast to immemorial age
Sacred, of Scythic birth, which, floodlike, surged
Far round the mount Armenian; nor so wide,
Those once the crutched hermit's eyes beheld
Uprist in bodily answer to his prayers,
By Danube's bank; whence hardy knighthood's shield;
Nor hosts immixed that by Propontic wave
Its ranks deployed by nations to salute
The golden-footed dame, who sheathed in steel
Her lilied breast, and couched her lance for love
Of Christ; and with the hope of wresting back
From infidels His hallowed tomb, led on,
With jewelled rein, and morion snowy plumed,
Her maiden chivalry and glittering queans,
Luckless; for, ah! their virgin valour quailed,
Ere yet the manlier might of stern Islam
Bounded upon the spoil: nor, till unhorsed,
Unhelmed, knew these the delicate foe they proved,
Flower-breathed, as in the moon of blossoms earth.
Nor that by sunny Tours where fell the force
Moorish, beneath the Frankland monarch's mace,
Which Europe saved from turban and Koraun;
Nor those above whose heads the flaming sword,
Two-handled, and two-edged with pest and fire,
Of militant angel pierced the clouds, and slew,
At one stroke, squadrons.[g]

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of depth immeasurable. Anon they move in perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders."—*Milton.*

"The warrior's name would be a name abhorr'd, and every nation that should lift again its hand against a brother, on its forehead should wear for evermore the curse of Cain."—*Longfellow.*

"A man is like a bit of Labrador spar, which has no lustre as you turn it in your hand, until you come to a particular angle, then it shows deep and beautiful colours."—*Emerson.*

g Bailey.

15–19. (15) **of the thirty,** mentioned in *v.* 11. **went down,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 13—17. **Adullam,** 1 Sa. xxii. 1. **Rephaim,** 2 Sa. v. 17—25.[a] (16) **in the hold,** some kind of fortress was so called. (17) **oh that,** *etc.*, a sudden and impulsive feeling showing Dav.'s strong attachment to the scenes of his boyhood. The response of the mighty men was made to please him, not as obedience to a command. We should be watchful even over the expression of our wishes. (18) **poured it out,** as a drink-offering. (19) **drink the blood,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 17.[b]

A hero.—The illustrious champion of the Gothic ages, Du Guesclin, Lord High Constable of France, possessed a person by no means favoured by nature. He said of himself when he was very young, "I am indeed very ugly; I shall never be a favourite with the ladies; but I trust I shall make myself feared by the enemies of my sovereign." From his earliest youth he breathed nothing but battles and feats of activity. "There never was a more unlucky boy in the world," said his mother, "than my son. He is always wounded in some way or other; his face is always full of scars; he is constantly beating, and being beaten." In the times in which Du Guesclin lived, the nobility were often

the well at the gate of Bethlehem

a 2 Sa. xxiii. 13; 1 Chr. xi. 15, 16, xiv. 9—16; Is. xvii. 5.

b "In 2 Sam. it is literally, 'blood of men going with their souls, or lives,' *i.e.* putting their lives in their hands to fetch it."—*Wordsworth.*

"Look not alone for your relations in your own house or in your own sphere. The blood of Christ

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is stronger for relationship than blood of father or mother. Look above you. All there are yours. Go down even to the bottom of society. All below you are judgment - day brothers: and God's eternity is on them and you alike."—*Beecher.*

assembled to give fêtes to the ladies. His father and many other courtiers published a tournament, to which they invited all the accomplished cavaliers in France and England. Young Du Guesclin observed with great pleasure the preparations that were making for the tournament, when his father, in consideration of his very early years, ordered him to stay in his chateau, and on no account whatever to follow him to Rennes. Soon after he was set out, young Du Guesclin quitted the castle in disguise, and placed himself among the spectators of this brilliant ceremony. Observing, however, a relation of his, who had retired from the engagement, unhorsed, he followed him to the inn, and with tears in his eyes entreated him to lend him his horse and armour. Having, with some difficulty, effected his purpose, he performed such wonders at the tournament, that the prize was adjudged him; this he offered to the chevalier who had accoutred him, for the honourable distinction which he obtained. This, however, the latter refused, and brought the young hero to his father, who embraced him amidst the applause of the spectators.[c]

[c] *Percy Anec.*

Abishai and Benaiah

20–25. (20) **chief of the three,** just mentioned, who did this feat. (21) **more honourable,** as being the leader in the enterprise. **first three,** those mentioned in *v.* 12. (22) **Benaiah,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 20—23. **lion,** *etc.*,[a] comp. Dav.'s own feat, 1 Sa. xvii. 34—37. (23) **five cubits,** seven feet six inches. **weaver's beam,** comp. 1 Sa. xvii. 7; 2 Sa. xxi. 19. (24) **the three mighties,** *i.e.* the second three. (25) **his guard,** his body-guard, this involved personal attendance on David.[b]

[a] "From this we learn that lions abounded in the land in the time of David; that they retreated into pits, and that they had snowy days even in Palestine."—*Thomson.*

[b] *Gesenius* prefers the rendering, "Took him into his privy council."

2 Sa. viii. 18, xx. 23; 1 Ki. i. 38.

"Courage mounteth with occasion."—*Shakespeare.*

v. 22. *Thomson's L. and B.* 286.

The most grand and magnificent procession the ancients ever beheld was a Roman triumph. After a decisive battle gained, the most illustrious captives in war, with their wives and children, were led in fetters before the general's chariot, through the public streets of

A brave man.—An instance of daring enterprise somewhat similar to the preceding, but differing in its result to the individual, occurred at the bridge of Inspruck in the Tyrol, during the late war. Steep rocks, fringed with brushwood, rose above the bridge on the southern side, which the Tyrolese occupied. From these rocks they kept up an irregular fire on the French infantry, who were endeavouring to make their way through the defile; and so great was the slaughter that in a very short time the road was literally blocked up with dead bodies. In this emergency an officer of the Bavarian dragoons volunteered to gallop over the bridge with his squadron, and dispossess the peasantry who occupied the cliffs. The Tyrolese, perceiving the cavalry winding up the ascent, set fire to the bridge, and in a very short time the flames spread rapidly along the fir beams on which it was supported. Not deterred, however, by this circumstance, nor by the dreadful fire which the peasantry directed towards this point, the brave horseman pressed forward, and spurring his horse with much difficulty over the dead bodies of his comrades, dashed into the midst of the flames. The eyes of both armies were anxiously turned upon this brave man, and the hoofs of his horse were just touching the rocks on the opposite side, when the burning rafter broke, and he was precipitated from an immense height into the torrent beneath. A momentary pause and a cessation from firing ensued, till the heavy splash in the deep ravine below announced his fate; and instantly a loud shout from the whole Tyrolese army, re-echoed through the impending rocks, announced to the neighbouring valleys that the French army was stopped at the important

defile.[e]—*Money wasted in war.*—Give me the money that has been spent in war, and I will purchase every foot of land on the globe. I will clothe every man, woman, and child in an attire that kings and queens might be proud of. I will build a school-house upon every hillside and in every valley over the habitable earth. I will supply that school-house with a competent teacher; I will build an academy in every town, and endow it: a college in every state, and fill it with able professors; I will crown every hill with a church consecrated to the promulgation of the Gospel of peace; I will support in its pulpit an able teacher of righteousness, so that on every Sabbath morning the chime on one hill shall answer to the chime on another around the earth's broad circumference; and the voice of prayer and the song of praise shall ascend like the smoke of a universal holocaust to heaven.[f]

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Home, scaffolds being everywhere erected, and the public places crowded to behold the sight.

e Percy Anec.

f Stebbins.

the valiant men of the armies

26—33. (26) **Asahel,** 2 Sa. ii. 18—32.[a] Comp. for the list of names given here 2 Sa. xxiii. 24—38. (27) **Harorite,** or *Harodite;* poss. fr. the spring *Harod.* **Pelonite,** or *Paltite.*[b] (28) **Tekoite,** of *Tekoa,* 2 Sa. xiv. 2. **Antothite,** native of *Anathoth,* Jos. xxi. 18. (29) **Sibbecai,** in Sam. he is called *Mebunnai.* **Ilai,** in Sam. called *Zalmon.* (30) **Heled,** or *Heleb.* **Netophathite,** of Netophah, a place near Bethlehem, poss. modern *Beit-Nettif.*[c] (31) **Pirathonite,** of *Pirathon,* Ju. xii. 15. (32) **Gaash,** Jos. xxiv. 30. **Arbathite,** native of the Arabah. (33) **Baharumite,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 31.

a 2 Sa. iii. 27, 30, xxiii. 24; 1 Chr. xi. 26, xxvii. 27.

b 2 Sa. xxiii. 26; 1 Chr. xxvii. 10.

c Ezr. ii. 22; Ne. vii. 26.

Courage and honesty.—The prince of Conti, being highly pleased with the intrepid behaviour of a grenadier at the siege of Philipsburgh, threw him a purse, excusing the smallness of the sum it contained, as being too poor a reward for such courage. Next morning, the grenadier went to the prince with two diamond rings, and other jewels of considerable value. "Sir," said he, "the gold I found in your purse, I suppose you intended for me; but these I bring back to you, having no claim to them." "You have doubly deserved them by your bravery and by your honesty," said the prince, "therefore they are yours."[d]—*Havoc of war.*—A few days before the entry of the French into Seville, during the Peninsular War, when the inhabitants, in great consternation, were packing up their most valuable effects to send them to Cadiz, a masterpiece of Correggio, representing the adoration of the shepherds, which was painted on wood, and which the proprietors, who were the monks of one of the convents of Seville, wished to preserve safe from the hands of the enemy, was sawn in two for its more easy carriage. By one of those accidents which will occur in the most regular times, and which are still more excusable in a period of great confusion, the two parts of Correggio got separated on their way to Cadiz, and on their arrival in that city one part was sold to one connoisseur, with the promise that the part wanting should be subsequently delivered to him, while the other part was sold to another connoisseur, under the same engagement. Both the parts arrived in England, and the possessor of each maintained that he was entitled to the other's lot. It is somewhat remarkable, that though the harmony of the composition is unquestionably broken by the separation of its parts, yet that each part forms of itself an admirable picture; and as the rival proprietors

"A dull man is so near a dead man that he is hardly to be ranked in the list of the living; and as he is not to be buried whilst he is half alive, so he is as little to be employed whilst he is half dead."—*Saville.*

d Percy Anec.

"We make ourselves more injuries than are offered to us; they many times pass for wrongs in our own thoughts, that were never meant so by the heart of him that speaketh. The apprehension of wrong hurts more than the sharpest part of the wrong done."—*Feltham.*

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are rich and obstinate, the parts are not likely to be united. The whole picture is worth four thousand guineas.[e]

e Percy Anec.

34—41. (34) **sons of,** the name of some warrior seems to have fallen out here.[a] (35—38) **Joel the brother,** *etc.*, comp. in 2 Sa. xxiii. 36 *Igal*, the son of Nathan. (39—41) **Uriah,** 2 Sa. xi. 3.

Uriah the Hittite (*v.* 41).—Foreigners resident in the country were permitted to serve in the Jewish armies, and they sometimes rose to a very high rank; for both Uriah and Ittai, who seem to have held principal commands in the armies of David, were aboriginal Canaanites. But in succeeding ages, the kings of Judah, affecting to imitate the policy of the surrounding potentates, or distrusting the omnipotent protection of Jehovah, occasionally hired large bodies of foreign troops to fight their battles, who, like mercenaries of later times, after expelling the invaders, sometimes turned their arms against their employers, and ravaged the country which they came to protect.[b]

a "Perhaps the most prob. conjecture is, that the 'Beni Hashem' of Chron. and the 'Beni Jashem' of Sam. alike conceal some single name of a man wh. cannot now be recovered."—*Spk. Com.*

b Paxton.

42—47. (42) **thirty with him,** whose names are not given, and over whom he was captain. (43—47) **Mithnite,** of unknown place called *Methin.* Other unknown places are indicated by the terms *Tizite*, *Maharite*, and *Mesobaite.*

Mark of bravery.—An unlucky private in one of the New York regiments was wounded in the battle of Bull Run; and his father arrived at the hospital just as the surgeon was removing the ball from the back of his shoulder. The boy lay with his face downward on the pallet. "Ah! my poor son," said the father, mournfully, "I'm very sorry; but it's a bad *place* to be hit in—thus in the back." The sufferer turned over, bared his breast, and pointing to the opening above the armpit, exclaimed, "Father, here's where the ball went in."—*Bravery in death.*—At the defeat of Romagnans, Bonivet, wounded, and not able to serve any longer, gave the command of the army up to Bayard, who, as usual, performed prodigies of valour, until he was wounded by a musket shot, which broke the vertebræ of his back. He then caused himself to be helped off his horse, and to be placed at the foot of a tree, "that, at least," said he, "I may die facing the enemy."[a]—*Prince Eugene on war.*—"The thirst of renown sometimes insinuates itself into our councils, under the garb of national honour. It dwells on imaginary insults; it suggests harsh and abusive language; the people go on from one thing to another, till they put an end to the lives of half a million of men. A military man becomes so sick of bloody scenes in war, that in peace he is averse to recommence them. I wish that the first minister who is called to decide on peace and war had only seen actual service."

"He is but the counterfeit of a man, who hath not the life of a man." — *Shakespeare.*

"The best hearts, Trim, are ever the bravest, replied my uncle Toby." —*Sterne.*

"A brave man is clear in his discourse, and keeps close to truth." — *Aristotle.*

a Percy Anec.

"War, — the trade of barbarians, and the art of bringing the greatest physical force to bear on a single point." — *Napoleon.*

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CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

David's friends at Ziklag

1—7. (1) **Ziklag,** 1 Sa. xxvii. 6. **close,**[a] in shelter, hidden. (2) **bows,** comp. 1 Chr. viii. 40; 2 Chr. xiv. 8. **and the left,** Ju. iii. 15. xx. 16. **Saul's brethren,** some of Saul's own tribe casting in their lot with David. (3) **Azmaveth,** ch. xi. 33. (4) **Gederathite,** Jos. xv. 36. (5) **Haruphite,** of a place not known, (6) **Korhites,** of some place in Benj. (7) **Gedor,** name of three different places.

a "While he was still shut out fr. the presence of Saul."—*Bertheau.*

"There is this

Both hands (*v.* 2).—I. Some men are, morally, left-handed. Do good and right thing, but awkwardly. II. Some who are right-handed are, after all, only single-handed: can do right things, but only one way. III. These men could use equally well both the right hand and the left, and each hand helped the other.

The wish of a good man.—I would rather, when I am laid in the grave, that some one in his manhood should stand over me and say, "There lies one who was a real friend to me, and privately warned me of the dangers of the young; no one knew it, but he aided me in time of need; I owe what I am to him." Or would rather have some widow, with choking utterance, telling her children, "There is your friend and mine; he visited me in my affliction, and found you, my son, an employer, and you, my daughter, a happy home in a virtuous family." I would rather that such persons should stand at my grave, than to have erected over it the most beautiful sculptured monument of Parian or Italian marble. The heart's broken utterance of reflections of past kindness, and the tears of grateful memory shed upon the grave, are more valuable in my estimation than the most costly cenotaph ever reared.[b]

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difference between a wise man and a fool: the wise man expects future things, but does not depend upon them, and in the meantime enjoys the present, remembering the past with delight; but the life of the fool is wholly carried on to the future."—*Epicurus.*

b Dr. Sharpe.

8—14. (8) **separated themselves,** fr. their families, *etc.*, devoting themselves to the interests of David. **hold,** prob. *Adullam.* (9—14) **over an hundred,**[a] or *could resist* a hundred, as marg.

the Gadites who aided David

Separated men (*v.* 8).—I. Consider what they left. Home, family, estate. II. For whom they did this. David, God's anointed. III. When they did this. When David was in danger and distress. IV. David remembered them in the days of his prosperity. How our King will reward His followers.

Choice of an imperial heir.—Kang Hi was one of the most illustrious princes that ever sat on the throne of China. He came to the throne in 1661, and from his earliest life exhibited that ardour of mind so well suited to the difficult task of governing. When the Emperor Cham-Chi, his father, was on his death-bed, he assembled his children together to fix upon a successor to the throne. On asking his eldest son if he should like to be emperor, he answered, that he was too weak to support so great a burden. The second made a similar answer. But when he put the question to young Kang Hi, who was not quite seven years of age, he replied, "Give me the empire to govern, and you shall see how I will acquit myself." The emperor was much pleased with this bold and simple answer. "He is a boy of courage," said Cham-Chi; "let him be emperor."[b]

a "Prob. the true meaning is, a little one of them was equal to a hundred, and a great one to a thousand."—*Wordsworth.*

"What a man is in private duties, that he is in the sight of God, and no more."—*Dr. Owen.*

Stanley's Sin. and Pal. 303, 326.

b Percy Anec.

15—22. (15) **first month,** spring-time. **overflown,** *etc.*, Jos. iii. 15. **put . . west,** reference is to Saul's guard that watched on either bank of the river the passage of the ford. (16) **and Judah,** so the company mentioned *vv.* 3—7 seems to have been a mixed one, not consisting of pure Benjamites. (17) **peaceably,** being Benj. he naturally suspected that they were of the party of Saul. (18) **the spirit,** a sudden impulse. **Amasai,** some think same as Amasa, David's nephew, and as a Judahite he came forward to speak for the party. (19) **with the Phil.,** *see* 1 Sa. xxix. 1—11. (20) **to Ziklag,** when the Phil. sent him back. (21) **band of the rovers,** 1 Sa. xxx. 1, 2. (22) **host of God,** great things usually spoken of by this formula.[a]

men of Judah and Benjamin who aided David

a Ps. xxxvi. 7, lxxx. 11; Jon. iii. 3.

vv. 16—18. *T. Bradbury,* I. 305.

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"He that does not know those things which are of use and necessity for him to know, is but an ignorant man, whatever he may know beside."—*Tillotson.*

Bonar's Land of Promise 84; *Robinson's Bib. Res.* ii. 262.

"Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, pompous in the grave."—*Sir T. Browne.*

b Blanchard.

The growing host (*v.* 22).—I. Those who came to David were from different tribes and of various qualities. II. David gave a hearty welcome to all—few or many. III. So David's host grew. The going over of some led to the following of others. The Host of the Church, following the Son of David, grows in the same way.

Disinterestedness of man.—

The man whom I
Consider as deserving of the name,
Is one whose thoughts and actions are for others,
Not for himself alone; whose lofty aim,
Adopted on just principles, is ne'er
Abandoned, while or earth or heaven afford
The means of its accomplishment. He is
One who seeks not by any specious road
To raise an indirect advantage, or
Takes a wrong path to gain a real good purpose;
Such were the man for whom a woman's heart
Should beat with constant truth while he exists,
And break when he expires![b]

David's army at Hebron

23—28. (23) **bands,** or men: rendered by LXX. and Vulg. *heads or captains.* (24) **children,** *etc.*, the number mentioned as fr. Judah is small in proportion, but it may include only those coming fr. distant parts of the tribe, not those with Dav. in Hebron. (25) **Simeon,** included within territories of Judah. (26) **of Levi,** not said to be warriors. (27) **Jehoiada,** not high priest,[a] but civil head of house of Aaron.[b] (28) **Zadok,** the subsequent high priest.[c]

a 1 Sa. xxiii. 9.

b Perhaps father of Benaiah, see 1 Chr. xi. 22.

c 2 Sa. viii. 17; 1 Ki. i. 8.

The warrior priest (*v.* 28).—I. The summary here given of life and character of Zadok. 1. In 2 Sam. viii. 17, we learn that he was a priest; 2. Here he is described as a young man mighty in valour. II. The suggestion we have concerning the need of the Host of the Lord. It needs—1. Young men; 2. Valiant men; 3. Religiously devoted men.

Appearances.—

That age is deade and vanisht long ago,
Which thought that steele, both trusty was and true.
And needed not a foyle of contraries,
But shewde al things euen as they were in deede.
In steade whereof, our curious years can finde
The christal glas, which glimseth braue and bright,
And shewes the thing much better far than it,
Beguylde with foyles, of sundry subtil sights,
So that they seeme and couet not to be.
This is the cause (beleve me now, my lorde)
That realmes do rewe from high prosperity,
That kings decline from princely gouernment,
That lords do lacke their auncestors good wil,
That knights consume their patrimonie still
That roysters brag, aboue their betters rome,
That sicophants are counted idly guests,
That Lais leades a ladies life alofte,
And Lucrece lurkes with sobre bashful grace.[c]

v. 23. *T. Bradbury,* i. 129.

"Men who have always thrust obstacles aside come to think their power invincible, and to make themselves a battering-ram against fate and circumstances. And when God comes down to oppose them, at first they try to wrestle with Him: but they limp all their life after, like Jacob of old; for God never wrestles with a man without throwing him."—*Beecher.*

c G. Gascoigne.

29—34. (29) **hitherto,** *etc.*, as a whole the Benjamites yet maintained allegiance to the house of Saul, and only this small

number came over to David. (30) **famous,** marg. *men of names.* (31) **expressed,** *etc.*, either full lists being furnished with them;[a] or this number was deputed by the rest of the tribe to represent them.[b] (32) **understanding,** *etc.*,[c] *i.e.* political judgment of the course affairs were taking. (33) **expert,** the time refers rather to the excellence of their soldiers' dress and arms. **double heart,** they were wholly devoted to the cause of David. (34) **with shield and spear,** men constituting the rank and file.

The propriety of considering times and circumstances.—From the character here given of the men of Issachar we shall take occasion to show—I. That our conduct must often be affected by times and circumstances of whatever nature. 1. Civil; 2. Social; 3. Personal. But your conduct must be influenced by them in temporal matters: there is still reason to inquire—II. How far it may be properly affected by them in the concerns of religion. 1. That we may attend to times, etc., is certain (exam. of Christ and Apostles); 2. But how far, is not easy to determine. III. What there is in the times, etc., of the present day to affect our conduct. Application: suggest a caution or two. 1. Guard against yielding to any corrupt bias; 2. The future judgment will be according to motives; 3. Seek for wisdom that is profitable to direct.[d]

The need of forethought.—

When we mean to build,
We first survey the plot, then draw the model;
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then must we rate the cost of the erection:
Which if we find outweighs ability,
What do we then but draw anew the model
In fewer offices; or, at least, desist
To build at all? Much more in this great work
(Which is, almost, to pluck a kingdom down,
And set another up) should we survey
The plot of situation, and the model;
Consent upon a sure foundation;
Question surveyors; know our own estate,
How able such a work to undergo,
To weigh against his opposite; or else
We fortify in paper and in figures,
Using the names of men instead of men:
Like one who draws the model of a house
Beyond his power to build it; who, half through,
Gives o'er, and leaves his part-created cost
A naked subject to the weeping clouds,
And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.[e]

35—40. (35) **expert,** *v.* 33. (36, 37) **on the other,** or *from* the other. (38) **perfect,** or sincere. **one heart,** one purpose, there was unity of feeling. (39) **eating,** *etc.*, a great coronation feast being prepared. (40) **nigh them,** living in the neighbourhood of the assembly. **unto Issachar,** *etc.*, which were distant and northern tribes.[a]

Under discipline (*v.* 38).—I. In this condensed summary of qualities, etc., only particulars of first importance are enumerated. This keeping rank, then, of consequence. II. What keeping rank involves. 1. Obedience to authority; 2. Regard to the general

B.C. *cir.* 1058.

a Wordsworth.

b Spk. Com.

c Heb. *binah*, moral and political prudence and wisdom.

v. 32. *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 33; *Stanley, Sin. and Pal.* 348.

"Happy are those that knowing in their births they are subject to uncertain changes, are still prepared and arm'd for either fortune: a rare principle, and with much labour learn'd in wisdom's school." — *Massinger.*

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"There is a wicked inclination in most people to suppose an old man decayed in his intellects. If a young or middle-aged man, when leaving a company, does not recollect where he laid his hat, it is nothing; but if the same inattention is discovered in an old man, people will shrug up their shoulders, and say, 'His memory is going.'" —*Johnson.*

e Shakespeare.

a "Supplies of provisions were abundantly furnished, not only by the people of the neighbourhood, but fr. distant parts of the country, for all wished the festivities to be on a scale of liberality and magnificence suitable

B.C. *cir.* 1058.

to the auspicious occasion." – *Jamieson.*

v. 40. *Stanley, Sin. and Pal.* 349.

"Agriculture is the most certain source of strength, wealth, and independence. Commerce flourishes by circumstances precarious, contingent, transitory, almost as liable to change as the winds and waves that waft it to our shores. She may well be termed the younger sister, for, in all emergencies, she looks to agriculture, both for defence and for supply."—*Colton.*

[b] *Dr. Kitto.*

pace of the whole; 3. Mutual help. III. The importance of keeping rank in church life and action.

Employment of oxen in the East (*v.* 40).—We see from this that oxen were used as beasts of burden. The form of back in these animals does not seem to adapt them to this kind of service; but it is one which, in the East, they are still often required to perform, and they do it well, although in their usual deliberate and quiet way. In the Greek writers there are intimations of the same use of oxen. At present, in different parts of Asia, they are more or less employed for riding, for burden, and for draught. In Western Asia we have frequently seen them ridden by women, children, and old or infirm people of the poorer (but not absolutely the poorest) classes, in removals and journeys to a town or village distant from their own. In the more eastern Asia they are still more extensively used for common riding. Their use as beasts of burden is still more extensive, and is not unknown in Europe or Africa; but in Western Asia, at least, they are not employed in caravan or other long journeys, but rather by the peasantry, for the conveyance of goods to or from the villages and towns of a district or province. They are also employed for draught perhaps more than any other animals in Asia. At Constantinople they draw the ornamented *arabah*. Wherever the peasantry employ carts they are drawn by oxen; in the Tartarian steppes they draw the movable huts and baggage of the nomades; and in India they are yoked to the carriages of even wealthy natives. The docile and vigorous white oxen of Guzerat are especially esteemed for this service; and, according to Forbes, some of these animals are valued at nearly two hundred pounds of our money. They travel at the rate of from thirty to forty miles a day. Buffaloes also, where they exist, are, in Asia, employed in the same services. We need not mention the employment of the ox in agriculture, that custom being all but universal.[b]

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

B.C. 1045.

the ark brought from Kirjath-jearim

1—4. (1) **consulted,** this early reference to the ark indicates the Levitical tone of these Books of Chronicles. The term used suggests that some kind of advisory council had been established.[a] (2) **the congregation,** described in *v.* 1. **left,** *etc.*, not summoned. Dav. wanted everybody to be interested in the matter. (3) **bring again,** or about, fr. Kirjath-jearim to Zion. (4) **was right,** they saw the importance of Dav.'s proposal.

David's first council.—I. Of whom it was composed. A fair representation of the whole. II. The subject for discussion, not how shall we plan the campaign, but shall we bring back the ark? III. The ground on which this was urged. The mind of God had not been considered in the past, *v.* 3. IV. A unanimous vote, *v.* 4. They all agreed that it should be done, but did not sufficiently consider how it should be accomplished.

Society.—

Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.

[a] For hints of such an arrangement before this, comp. Nu. xxxi. 14; 1 Sa. viii. 12, xvii. 18; 1 Chr. xii. 20; and for further hints of Dav.'s arrangement, 1 Chr. xv. 25, xxvi. 26, xxviii. 1.

"A reserved man is in continual conflict with the social part of his nature, and even grudges himself

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But man, associated and leagued with man,
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans,
Beneath one head, for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly; and, by compression marred,
Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature; and disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial justice red.
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.[b]

the laugh into which he is sometimes betrayed." — *Shenstone.*

"We must love men, ere to us they will seem worthy of our love." — *Shakespeare.*

"A man who has tasted with profound enjoyment the pleasure of agreeable society will eat with a greater appetite than he who rode horseback for two hours. An amusing lecture is as useful for health as exercise of the body."—*Kant.*

b Cowper.

5—8. (5) **from Shihor,**[a] commentators seem agreed that this is not the Nile, but a small stream flowing into the Mediterranean, wh. was recognised as the S. boundary of Palestine. The valley thro' wh. it flowed is now called *Wady-el-Arish.* **Hemath,** or *Hamath,* defile bet. mountain ranges of Syria, on the north. Nu. xxxiv. 8. (6) **Baalah,** Jos. xv. 9. **whose .. called,** or where His name is called or invoked. (7) **Abinadab,** 2 Sa. vi. 3. (8) **played,** musical instruments, as signs of great joy. Comp. 2 Sa. vi. 5.

the ark brought out: house of Abinadab

a Comp. Nu. xxxiv. 5; Jos. xv. 4, 47; 1 Ki. viii. 65; 2 Ki. xxiv. 7; 2 Chr. vii. 8.

Imperfect methods (*v.* 7).—I. The end to be attained was a good one. II. In the hurry to secure it the proper method was overlooked. III. The error in choice of means delayed the accomplishment of the end. "Slow and sure" a safer rule to work by than "the more haste the less speed."

v. 5. Stanley, Sin. and Pal. 121.

The new heavens and the new earth are for renewed men.

The city of forests (*v.* 6).—David, alluding to this event in Ps. cxxxii., says, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah." He got tidings of it at the place of his own birth; and accordingly it is added, "We found it in the fields of the wood." Kirjath-jearim, the city of forests—for that the name signifies—answers exactly to the situation thus poetically described; and the difference between the two modes of designating the place is precisely that which might be expected to distinguish the style of the historian from the style of the poet. Its present Arabic name of Kuriet-el-Enab means the city of grapes—only a very slight modification of its old Scripture designation, and equally suggestive of fertility and fruitfulness.[b]

"I have found by experience that they who have spent all their lives in cities, contract not only an effeminacy of habit, but of thinking." — *Goldsmith.*

b Dr. Buchanan.

9—14. (9) **Chidon,** called *Nachon,* 2 Sa. vi. 6. **stumbled,**

Uzzah killed

B.C. 1045.

for touching the ark

bec. the descent was steep and dangerous. (10) **put his hand,**[a] the ark was not to be touched, and it would not have needed this touch if, in obedience to the law, it had been carried by poles on the priests' shoulders. Throughout there was a sinful neglect of the Divine regulations. (11) **displeased,** better *vexed,* or *grieved:* not intending to say that he was *angry* at God. (12) **afraid,** with a godly fear that made him henceforth more anxious to know the Divine will. (13) **Gittite,** 2 Sa. vi. 10. (14) **blessed,** *etc.,* 2 Sa. vi. 11.

Perez-uzza (*v.* 11).—I. The principle enforced—that the end does not justify the means. Right things should be secured in the right way. II. This principle may be applied in all departments of life—social, intellectual, political, religious. Zeal that is not according to knowledge. III. Good things are often marred by bad methods. The fury of party and sectarian zeal often defers the worthy ends they aim at.

Restraint on man.—There is always, and everywhere, some restraint upon a great man. He is guarded with crowds, and shackled with formalities. The half hat, the whole hat, the half smile, the whole smile, the nod, the embrace, the positive parting with a little bow, the comparative at the middle of the room, the superlative at the door; and if the person be *pan huper sebastus,* there is a hyper-superlative ceremony then of conducting him to the bottom of the stairs, or to the very gate, as if there were such rules set to these leviathans as are to the sea—"Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther."[b]—*Daily sin.*—Since we contract guilt every day, let us daily apply the medicine. As often as an Israelite had been bitten by the fiery serpent, he must have looked up to the brazen one, if he would not have been destitute of a cure; and we, upon every sting of conscience, must look up to Him who hath been "lifted up" upon the cross for our remedy. Since the fountain is open every day, and we contract guilt every day, let not a day pass without fresh application of the blood of Jesus Christ upon any defects in our walking with Him; since, if we walk in the light, and are industrious to observe the will of God, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."[c]

a Nu iv. 15.

vv. 9, 10. *Dr. Marshall,* ii. 162; *Ibid.* ii. 192.

v 14. *Bp. Wilberforce, Ss. on S. v. Occasions,* 231. Luther tells of a nobleman at Vienna who made a great supper, and, in the midst of his mirth, exclaimed, "If God will leave me this world to live and enjoy my pleasure therein for a thousand years, then let Him take His heaven to Himself!" This man spoke what most men think.

b *Cowley.*

"He that calls a man ungrateful sums up all the evil that a man can be guilty of."—*Swift.*

c *S. Charnock.*

B.C. *cir.* 1043.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

David's wives

1—7. (1) **Hiram,** 2 Sa. v. 11.[a] (2) **Israel,** here used of those adhering to house of Saul, as distinct from the party of Judah, attached to David. The distinction is made plain by the separation of the kingdom in time of Rehoboam. (3) **more wives,** comp. 1 Sa. xxv. 42—44; 2 Sa. v. 13; 1 Chr. iii. 9. (4—7) **now . . Eliphalet,** comp. other lists.[b]

The relation of a wife.—

A wife's a man's best piece; who till he marries
Wants making up; she is the shrine to which
Nature doth send us forth on pilgrimage;
She was a scion taken from that tree,
Into which, if she has no second grafting
The world can have no fruit: she is man's
Arithmetic, which teaches him to number
And multiply himself in his own children.[c]

a "Elsewhere in Chron. he is always called *Huram* (2 Chr. ii. 3 11, viii. 18, ix. 10 21), and this is the Masoretic reading in the present passage."—*Spk.Com.*

b 2 Sa. v. 14—16; 1 Chr. iii. 5—9, xiv. 4—7,

She is the good man's paradise, and the bad's
First step to heaven ; a treasure which, who wants,
Cannot be trusted to posterity,
Nor pay his own debts ; she's a golden sentence
Writ by our Maker, which the angels may
Discourse of, only men know how to use,
And none but devils violate.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1043

c Shirley.

8–12. (8) **to seek David,**[a] attempting, by a bold stroke, to crush him before his power was consolidated. (9) **Rephaim,** prob. a little S.W. of Jerus. (10) **enquired,** *etc.*, thro' the high priest. By this act at the beginning Dav. designed to give a tone to his reign. (11) **Baal-perazim,** 2 Sa. v. 20 ; Is. xxviii. 21. (12) **gods,** images carried on expeditions, and into battle-fields.[b]

battle of Baal-perazim

a "Their hostility arose both fr. a belief that his patriotism would lead him, ere long, to wipe out the national dishonour at Gilboa, and by fear that, in any invasion of their country, his thorough knowledge of their weak points would give him superior advantages." — *Jamieson.*

2 Sa. v. 17—25.

b Comp. 1 Sa. iv. 4—11; 2 Sa. v. 21.

Baal-perazim (*v.* 11).—I. A battle begun with inquiry of God, *v.* 10. II. A battle resulting in victory by the help of God. III. A battle ending with destruction of idols for the honour of God. IV. A battle so begun and finished did not lead to presumption on the part of the victors.

The battle field.—

And silence was upon that fatal field,
Save when, to nature's anguish forced to yield,
Some fallen soldier heaved a broken sigh
For his far home, and turn'd him round to die ;
Or when the wailing voice of woman told
That her long weary search was not in vain,
And she had found the bosom, stiff and cold,
Where her soft clustering curls had often lain.
'Twas one of these that burst upon my ear
While watching on that field : the wind-harp's tone
Was not more mournful nor more sweetly clear
Than was the sound of that sad woman's moan.
Through the dim twilight I beheld a form,
Her dark brow clouded with grief's passionate storm,
And on her breast an infant calmly slept,
Which she would pause to gaze on ; and again,
With bitterness renew'd, she loudly wept,
And call'd on its dead father—but in vain ![c]

Bonar's Land of Promise, 121.

c Hon. Mrs. Norton.

13–17. (13) **yet again,** prob. when the next fighting season came round. (14) **not up,** *i.e.* directly meeting them ; but come on them by stratagem : get round upon their rear. (15) **sound of going,** as of wind. (16) **Gibeon,** now *Yefa*, in country of Judah.[a] **Gazer,** uncertain, but somewhere in maritime plain. (17) **fame of David,** as a warrior.

battle of Gibeon

a "The line fr. this to Gazer was intersected by the roads wh. led fr. Judah to the cities of the Phil., and to recover possession of it, therefore, as was effected by this decisive battle, was equivalent to setting free the whole mountains of Judah, as far as their most westerly slope." —*Bertheau.*

Victory through obedience (*v.* 16).—I. Conquest of self precedes conquest of enemies. David so ruled his spirit that, though victorious, he would not follow up victory but with Divine permission. II. Conquest of self leads to conquest of enemies. David, having confidence in God, surrendered himself to His leadership, and was led on from victory to victory.

The scene of the battle.—Wearying very soon with what we could not understand—the ceremonies in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—we mounted and set off for Bethlehem. Rising out of the valley of Gihon at the point, I presume, where the boundary-line between Judah and Benjamin passed from the

B.C. *cir.* 1043.

Bonar's Land of Promise, 121.

valley of Hinnom into the plain of Rephaim, we stopped awhile to allow our guide to point out the precise spot where the Philistines had their camp when David "fetched a compass, and came upon them over against the mulberry trees." The plain itself is stony and uneven, and declines rapidly toward the west.—*The cost of war.*—The cost of the war of 1870 according to an article in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, was comparatively small. On the part of France it amounted to £371,000,000, to which 173 millions may be added as the value of the ceded territory. The amount spent by Germany was, of course, less, the troops operating in the enemy's country, no towns having to be victualled, and the commissariat being much better managed than with the French. The cost of the North German Confederation has been officially stated as £47,000,000. When the truce was concluded the German Treasury was empty, and but for the contribution levied on Paris and the first instalment of the indemnity, a new loan would have been necessary. The £6,000,000 of the German war chest and the £58,000,000 of the war loan must have been exhausted. Contemporary wars have been far more costly. Brazil expended 120 millions in its war against Paraguay; the American Civil war cost 330 millions; the Crimean war cost England 167 millions; the Abyssinian Expedition 8¾ millions; and the Ashantee war 1½ millions. The cost of the Franco-German war is all the more moderate inasmuch as private compensation is included—seven millions on the German and 24 millions on the French side. The loss of 129,250 German soldiers, who were killed on the battle-field or died in hospitals, would not, however, remark the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, be compensated even were the cost of the war repaid thrice over.

b Dr. Thomson.

"What infernal being, all powerful in mischief, fills the bosom of man with such insatiable rage for war! If familiarity with the sight had not destroyed all surprise at it, and custom blunted the sense of its evils, who could believe that those wretched beings are possessed of rational souls, who contend with all the rage of furies? Robbery, blood, butchery, desolation, confound without distinction every thing sacred and profane."—*Erasmus.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

B.C. 1042.

David prepares a place for the ark

1—10. (1) **houses,** ch xi. 8; reference may be to the separate houses round his palace built for the accommodation of his wives and their families. **a tent,** a new one; it is singular that he did not remove the old one fr. Gibeon.[a] (2) **none ought,** Nu. iv. 15.[b] (3) **all Israel,** in their representatives, as ch. xiii. 1, 2. (4) **children of Aaron,** priests as disting. fr. Levites. (5—10) **Kohath,** this family was specially appointed to carry the ark. **Elizaphan,** Ex. vi. 16—22. **Hebron,** Ex. vi. 18.

a "I cannot conceive why Dav., who knew the law, and was zealous for it, did not either bring the ark to Gibeon, or bring the tabernacle to Zion." — *Matt. Henry*

1 Chr. xvi 39; 2 Chr i 3

b Nu i 50, vii. 9, x 17.

Worship due to God.—The Emperor Augustus hearing that a gentleman of Rome, notwithstanding a great burden of debt wherewith he was oppressed, slept quietly and took his ease, desired to buy the bed that he lodged on, remarking that it seemed to him a wonderful bed whereon a man could sleep that was so deeply involved.[c] If we thought of our daily obligations to our God, could we lie down to sleep or rest in peace without having rendered to him the tribute of our praise, and so discharged to that extent the obligation to worship Him?

c Spencer.

the ark brought from house of Obed-edom

11—16. (11) **the priests,** 2 Sa. viii. 17.[a] (12) **sanctify yourselves,** according to Mosaic requirements before engaging in any solemn service.[b] (13) **a breach,** ch. xiii. 11. **due**

order, *i.e.* by carrying on shoulders of Levites. (14) **to bring up,** fitting themselves for the work. (15) **staves,** *etc.*, Ex. xxv. 14. (16) **singers,** *etc.*, word is used to include musicians.[c]

God is omniscient.—What would you say, if wherever you turned, whatever you were doing, whatever thinking, whether in public or private, with a confidential friend, telling your secrets, or alone planning them, if, I say, you saw an eye constantly fixed on you, from whose watching, though you strove ever so much, you could never escape; and even if you closed your own eye to avoid, you still fancied that to get rid of was impossible—that it could perceive your every thought? The supposition is awful enough. There is such an Eye, though the business and struggles of the world too often prevent us from considering this awful truth. In crowds we are too much interrupted, in the pursuit of self-interest we are too much perverted, in camps we are struggling for life and death, in courts we see none but the eye of a human sovereign; nevertheless, the Divine Eye is always upon us, and when we least think of it, is noting all, and, whatever we may think of it, will remember all.[d]—*The holiness of God.*—The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others; it is rather a general term representing the conception of His consummate perfection and total glory. It is His infinite moral perfection crowning His infinite intelligence and power. There is a glory of each attribute viewed abstractedly, and a glory of the whole together. The intellectual nature is the essential basis of the moral. Infinite moral perfection is the crown of the Godhead. Holiness is the total glory thus crowned.[e]

17–24. (17) **Heman,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. iv. 31; 1 Chr. ii. 6, vi. 33, 39, 44. (18) **second degree,** either subordinate leaders, or forming the second choir. **porters,** this word applies only to Obed-edom and Jeiel (or Jehiah), *v.* 24. (19) **cymbals,** instruments of percussion, producing a clanging sound. (20) **psalteries,** small kinds of harp, poss. represented by mod. *banjo*, or guitar. **Alamoth,** prob. signifies a *treble* voice, fr. *almah*, a maiden.[a] (21) **Sheminith,** appears to be derived fr. *shemonah*, eight, and to signify the lowest or bass voice.[b] (22) **for song,** marg. *for the carriage*, or *burden*.[c] (23) **door-keepers,** *see v.* 24. (24) **blow,** making joyous blasts, not music.

The power of music.—Sultan Amurath, a prince notorious for his cruelty, laid siege to Bagdad; and, on taking it, gave orders for putting thirty thousand Persians to death, notwithstanding they had submitted and laid down their arms. Among the number of the victims was a musician, who entreated the officer to whom the execution of the sultan's order was entrusted to spare him for a moment, that he might speak to the author of the dreadful decree. The officer consented, and he was brought before Amurath, who permitted him to exhibit a specimen of his art. Like the musician in Homer, he took up a kind of psaltery, which resembles a lyre, and has six strings on each side, and accompanied it with his voice. He sung the capture of Bagdad and the triumph of Amurath. The pathetic tones and exulting sounds which he drew from the instrument, joined to the alternative plaintiveness and boldness of his strains, rendered the prince unable to restrain the softer emotions of his soul.

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a "Zadok is put first as being of the line of Phinehas. . . . He was prob. connected with the service of the tabernacle at Gibeon.' —*Wordsworth.*

b I.e. xi. 44; Nu xi. 18; 2 Chr xxix. 5. See also Ge. xxxv. 2; Ex. xix. 10, 15.

c "Singing had long been recognised as appropriate to religious ceremonies (Ex. xv. 21; Jud. v 1; 1 Chr. xiii. 8); but this is the first occasion on wh. we find the duty of conducting musical services expressly laid on the Levites. Hitherto music seems to have been chiefly cultivated in the 'schools of the prophets.'"—*Spk. Com.*

d De Vere.

e A. A. Hodge.

the order of the procession

a Gesenius.

b Gesenius.

Marg. is, "on the eighth to oversee."

c "Probably the marg. reading is to be preferred, and the meaning is that Dav. appointed a person to oversee the bearing or carrying of the ark to ensure that Mosaic conditions were observed." —See *Wordsworth.*

"Sweetest melodies are those that are by distance made more sweet." —*Wordsworth.*

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"Voice, melodious as revolving spheres attuned by touch angelic."—*F. B. Burges.*

He even suffered him to proceed, until, overpowered with harmony, he melted into tears of pity, and repented of his cruelty. In consideration of the musician's abilities, he not only directed his people to spare those among the prisoners who yet remained alive, but also to give them instant liberty.[d]—*Early effects of music.*—The Greeks tells us that Orpheus and Amphion drew the wild beasts after them, made the trees and stones dance to the tune of their harps, and brought them together in such a manner as to form a regular wall, and enclose a great city. Stripped of its fable, this story, according to general interpretation, signifies that they subdued the savage dispositions of a barbarous people, who lived in caves, woods, and deserts, and by representing to them in their songs the advantages of society, persuaded them to build cities, and form a community. It is certain that there is no temper so fierce or brutish but what music, if properly applied, can soften and civilise; and the history of the ancients, long after it had ceased to consist of fable, abounds in instances which show that the art, even in its infancy, has produced some very extraordinary effects. Tyrteus, the Spartan poet, by certain verses which he sung to the accompaniment of flutes, so enflamed the courage of his countrymen, that they achieved a great victory over the Messenians, to whom they had submitted in several previous conflicts. Timotheus, with his flute, could move the passions of Alexander as he pleased, inspiring him at one moment with the greatest fury, and soothing him the next into a state the most gentle and placid. Pythagoras, instructed a woman, by the power of music, to arrest the fury of a young man who came to set her house on fire; and his disciple, Empedocles, employed his lyre with success to prevent another from murdering his father, when the sword was unsheathed for that purpose. The fierceness of Achilles was allayed by playing on the harp, on which account Homer gives him nothing else out of the spoils of Eëtion. Damon, with the same instrument, quieted wild and drinking youths; and Asclepiades, in a similar manner, brought back seditious multitudes to temper and reason. Music is reported to have been also efficacious in removing several dangerous diseases. Picus Mirandola observes, in explanation of its being appropriate to such an end, that music moves the spirits to act upon the soul and the body. Theophrastus, in his essay on Enthusiasm, reports many cures performed on this principle. It is certain that the Thebans used the pipe for the cure of many disorders, which Galen called, *Super loco affecto tibia cavere.* So Zenocrates is said to have cured several madmen, and among others, Sarpander and Arion.

d *K. Arvine.*

"Though cheerfulness and I have long been strangers, harmonious sounds are still delightful to me: there's sure no passion in the human soul but finds its food in music."—*Lily.*

"Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment? Sure something holy lodges in that breast, and with these raptures moves the vocal air to testify his hidden residence."—*Milton.*

"Music is the only sensual gratification which mankind may indulge in to excess without injury to their moral or religious feelings."—*Addison.*

David danced before the ark

25—29. (25) **went,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. vi. 12, 13.[a] (26) **God helped,** 2 Sa. vi. 13. (27) **robe,** the mantle, Heb. *meil.*[b] **the song,** or burden. **ephod,** over his shoulders.[c] (28) **all Israel,** by their representatives, not absolutely all. (29) **Michal,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. vi. 16, 20.

a 1 Ki viii. 1.

b Ex. xxviii. 4, xxix 5; 1 Sa. ii. 19, xv. 27.

c 1 Sa. ii. 18, 28.

vv. 25—29. *K. James I., A Meditation, Wks.* 81.

Eastern dancing.—We were awakened from our first sleep by the sounds of tinkling instruments, accompanied by a chorus of female voices. I looked out of the window, and saw a band of thirty damsels, at least, come tripping towards us, with measured paces and animated gestures. The moon shone very brightly and we had a full view of them, from their entering the gate of

our street, until they reached our house. Here they stopped, and, spreading themselves in a circle before the door, renewed the dance and song with infinite spirit, and recalled to our minds the picture which is so fully given of these dancing females in Holy Writ. After they had favoured us a few minutes with their lively performance, they moved on to the hakeem's house: and serenading him with an air or two, this joyous band quitted our quarter, and went, as the dying sounds informed us, to awaken the other slumberers of the town to melody and joy. We were impatient to know the cause of the agreeable disturbance we met with last night, and learned from one of our guard, that the dancing girls observe the ceremony we were witness to on the first visible rise of the Nile. It seems that they took our house in the way to the river, where they went down to bathe at that late hour, and to sing the praises of the benevolent Power who yearly distributes His waters to supply the necessities of the natives.[d]

B C. 1042.

"The gymnasium of running, walking on stilts, climbing, etc., steels and makes hardy single powers and muscles; but dancing, like a corporeal poesy, embellishes, exercises, and equalises all the muscles at once." —*Richter.*

d Irwin's Voyage.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1042

the ark lodged in the tent

1—6. (1) **in the midst**, or middle. Dav. did but take care of the ark until its proper resting-place in the temple was provided. (2) **blessed**, or prayed God to bless.[a] (3) **dealt**, *etc.*, these were the remains of his extensive thank-offerings.[b] **flagon**, a cake made of flour and honey, or of pressed fruits. 2 Sa. vi. 18. (4) **record**, better trans. *celebrate.*[c] (5) **Asaph**, *etc.*, see ch. xv. 19—24; the temporary arrangement made for removing the ark became a permanent one. **Jeiel**, either the *Aziel* of ch. xv. 20, or *Jaaziel* of ch. xv. 18. (6) **trumpets**, ch. xv. 24.

Music designed to prepare for heaven.—I am persuaded that music is designed to prepare for heaven, to educate for the choral enjoyment of Paradise, to form the mind to virtue and devotion, and to charm away evil and sanctify the heart to God. A Christian musician is one who has a harp in his affections, which he daily tunes to the notes of the angelic host, and with which he makes melody in his heart to the Lord. Does he strike the chord with his hands? it is to bid lute and harp awake to the glory of God. The hand, the tongue, and the ear form a kind of triple chord not to be broken. Bring music to this test, and your vocal hours will not be spent in vain. The instruction of your childhood will supply you through life with a fountain of pleasures, drawn from the true source of legitimate recreation. Sing the songs of Zion, and, amidst the vibrations of the air, may true prayer and praise ascend to heaven, and enter into the ears of the Lord God of our salvation; and then will the harmonious combination be complete.[d]—*Influence of music.*—The diffusion of a taste for music, and the increasing elevation of its character, may be regarded as a national blessing. The tendency of music is to soften and purify the mind. The cultivation of a musical taste furnishes to the rich a refined and intellectual pursuit, which excludes the indulgence of frivolous and vicious amusements, and to the poor a "*laborum dulce lenimen*," a relaxation from toil more attractive than the haunts of intemperance. All music of an elevated character is calculated to produce such

a 2 Sa. vi. 18; comp. 1 Ki. viii. 14, 15.

b Comp. 2 Chr. vii. 8, 9, 10.

c Comp. titles of Ps. xxxviii. and lxx.; one important service of psalms and hymns is to recount, call to remembrance, the Divine mercies.

"The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect music has on us? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that!" —*Carlyle.*

d Legh Richmond.

"All good music is sacred if it is heard sacredly; and all poor music is exe-

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effects; but it is to sacred music, above all, that they are to be ascribed. Music may sometimes be the handmaid of debauchery; but this music never can. Bacchanalian songs and glees may heighten the riot of a dissolute party: but that man must be profligate beyond conception, whose mind can entertain gross propensities while the words of inspiration, clothed with the sounds of Handel, are in his ears. In the densely peopled manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire, music is cultivated among the working classes to an extent unparalleled in any other part of the kingdom. Every town has its choral society, supported by the amateurs of the place and its neighbourhood, where the sacred works of Handel, and the more modern masters, are performed with precision and effect by a vocal and instrumental orchestra, consisting of mechanics and work-people; and every village church has its occasional holiday oratorio, where a well-chosen and well-performed selection of sacred music is listened to by a decent and attentive audience of the same class as the performers, mingled with their employers and their families. Hence the practice of this music is an ordinary domestic and social recreation among the working classes of these districts; and its influence is of the most salutary kind. The people, in their manners and usages, retain much of the simplicity of "the olden time;" the spirit of industrious independence maintains its ground among them, and they preserve much of their religious feelings and domestic affections, in spite of the demoralising effects of a crowded population, fluctuating employment, and pauperism. Their employers promote and encourage so salutary a recreation by countenancing and contributing to defray the expenses of their musical associations; and some great manufacturers provide regular musical instruction for such of their work-people as show a disposition for it. "It is earnestly to be wished," says a late writer, "that such an example were generally followed in establishments where great numbers of people are employed. Wherever the working classes are taught to prefer the pleasures of intellect, and even of taste, to the gratification of sense, a great and favourable change takes place in their character and manners. They are no longer driven, by mere vacuity of mind, to the beershop: and a pastime, which opens their minds to the impressions produced by the strains of Handel and Haydn, combined with the inspired poetry of the Scriptures, becomes something infinitely better than the amusement of an idle hour. Sentiments are awakened which make them love their families and their homes; their wages are not squandered in intemperance; and they become happier as well as better." In every class of society the influence of music is salutary. Intemperance may be rendered more riotous and more vicious by the excitement of loose and profane songs, and music may be an auxiliary to the meretricious blandishments of the stage. But the best gifts of nature and art may be turned to instruments of evil; and music, innocent in itself, is merely abused when it is conjoined with immoral poetry and the allurements of pleasure. "Music," says Burney, "may be applied to licentious poetry: but the poetry then corrupts the music, not the music the poetry. It has often regulated the movements of lascivious dances: but such airs, heard for the first time without the song or dance, could convey

erably unsacred. The sweetest music is not the peal of marriage-bells, nor tender descants in moonlight woods, nor trumpet-notes of victory; it is the soul's welcome to victory. God grant that, when we die, there may not come booming to our ear the dreadful sound, 'Depart!' but may we hear stealing upon the air the mellow chime of all the celestials bells, saying, 'Come, come, come, ye blessed: enter ye into the joy of your Lord." —*Beecher.*

"Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days, immortal heirs of universal praise! Whose honours with increase of ages grow, as streams roll down, enlarging as they flow; nations unborn your mighty names shall sound, and worlds applaud that must not yet be found."—*Pope.*

"The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect that music has on us? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that." —*Carlyle.*

no impure ideas to an innocent imagination; so that Montesquieu's assertion is still in force, that 'music is the only one of all the arts which does not corrupt the mind.'"[e]

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e Hogarth.

7—11. (7) **delivered,** *etc.*, ref. is not to this psalm, but to the definite appointment of Asaph, etc., to musical duties fr. the very day of the return of the ark.[a] The psalm contained in the foll. verses is a composite one, and represents a *service* rather than a *psalm*.[b] (8) **make known,** to God; show Him that you recognise His mighty workings. (9) **psalms,** this word should be kept to mean, a *hymn of praise*. (10) **glory ye,** boast ye. (11) **his strength,** that strength having been illustrated in the successful up-bringing of the ark.

David's thanksgiving at the carrying up of the ark.—We behold religion in its full exercise. Consider—I. The general frame of mind that it requires. 1. That God should be the supreme object of regard; 2. This is truly rational religion. II. The particular duties it enjoins. 1. To thank the Lord for all past mercies; 2. To pray to Him for future blessings; 3. To glory in Him as our God and portion; 4. To be always mindful of His covenant. Application:—(1) Reproof; (2) Encouragement.[c]

Universality of praise.—Praise is the religious exercise—the one religious exercise—of heaven. Angels are offering it ceaselessly, resting not night or day. Saints are offering it ceaselessly in Paradise. Nature in her every district is offering it ceaselessly. From the heavens, which declare the glory of God and the firmament which showeth His handiwork, down to the dewdrop which sparkles with the colours of the rainbow, and the lark, who tunes her cheerful carol as she salutes the rising sun, the whole creation sends up one grand chorus of praise to the throne of God.[d]

12—15. (12) **judgments,** with poss. allusion to the first failure and death of Uzzah. (13) **Israel,** in later times the patriarch Jacob was regarded as founder of the race. (14) **all the earth,** reaching beyond their own history. (15) **covenant,**[a] made with Abraham, and confirmed again and again, faithfulness to wh. was the one condition of national prosperity.

A wonderful memory.—That excellent man and delightful writer, Fuller, mentions St. Dustan's-in-the-East when talking of his singular gift of memory. It is said that Fuller could "repeat five hundred strange words after twice hearing them, and could make use of a sermon verbatim, if he once heard it." Still further, it is said that he undertook, in passing from Temple Bar to the extremity of Cheapside, to tell, at his return, every sign as it stood in order on both sides of the way (repeating them either backwards or forwards), and that he performed the task exactly. This is pretty well, considering that in that day every shop had its sign. That many, however, of the reports respecting his extraordinary memory were false or exaggerated, may be gathered from an amusing anecdote recorded by himself. "None alive," says he, "ever heard me pretend to the art of memory, who in my book (*Holy State*) have decried it as a trick, no art; and, indeed, is more of fancy than memory. I confess some years since, when I came out of the pulpit of St. Dunstan's East, one (who since wrote a book thereof) told

David's psalm of thanksgiving

a "We learn nothing from this passage as to the order in wh. Dav. composed, or published, his psalms." — *Spk. Com.*

b The whole of it will be found, with very slight variations, in Ps. xcvi., cv. 1—15, cvi. 47, 48.

"Music, once admitted to the soul, becomes a sort of spirit, and never dies. It wanders perturbedly through the halls and galleries of the memory, and is often heard again, distinct and living as when it first displaced the wavelets of the air." —*E. B. Lytton.*

c Simeon.

d Dr. Goulburn.

a Ge. xii. 1—3.

"Remembrance wakes with all her busy train, swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain." —*Goldsmith.*

It is related of Beza, one of the reformers, that when he was old and could not recollect the names of persons and things he had heard but a few minutes before, he could remember and repeat the Epistles of St. Paul, which he had committed to memory when he was young.

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b W. Thornbury.

v. 19. *F. Skurray, Ss.* 1.

"Young people say 'Thanks,' now, not 'Thank you.' The phrase is of respectable parentage, having descended from classic languages, and being used by our best writers. It occurs fifty-five times in Shakespeare, and four times in the English Bible."—*Good Words.*

a Hannah Moore.

a Ge. xii. 10, xx. 1, xxvi. 1, 2.

v. 22. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 43.

The singing God's praise, with the spirit and the understanding, always, with the Divine blessing, leaves a precious influence upon those who hear it.

"No ashes are lighter than those of incense, and few things burn out sooner."—*Landor.*

b Bp. Reynolds.

a Ps. xcvi. 6. "The word rendered praise primarily signifies the *irradiation* of a luminous body. The high ambition of a penitent soul is that of becoming a reflector, from which the glories of the Sun

me in the vestry before credible people, that he, in Sidney College, had taught me the art of memory. I returned unto him, That it was not so, for I could not remember that I had ever seen him before! which, I conceive, was a real refutation."[b]

16—19. (16) **oath unto Isaac,** Ge. xxvi. 2—5. (17) **confirmed,** *etc.*, Ge. xxviii. 13—15. **everlasting,** in sense of enduring and unchanging. (18) **land of Canaan,** Ge. xv. 18—21. (19) **few,** Ge. xxxiv. 30.

The disinterestedness of praise.—Praise is the only employment in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise of our affection; prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praise exempt from our mixture of infirmity and alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude unknown even to the angels: they are unfallen and holy beings—they cannot say, as we can, "Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us!" Prayer is the child of faith, praise of love: prayer is prospective; praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future blessings: prayer points the only way to heaven; praise is already there.[a]

20—22. (20) **from nation,** *etc.*, reference is intended to the visits of the patriarchs to Egypt and Philistia.[a] (21) **reproved kings,** *e.g.* Pharaoh, and Abimelech: *see* refs. to prev. *v.* (22) **mine anointed,** Abr. as called, and set apart by God. **prophets,** patriarchs regarded as witnesses for God in their age.

The benefits of praise.—All the benefit which ariseth out of this duty redounds to us, and none to God. His glory is infinite, and eternally the same: there is and can be no accession unto that by all our praises. When a glass reflecteth the brightness of the sun, there is but an acknowledgment of what was, not any addition of what was not. When an excellent orator makes a panegyrical oration in praise of some honourable person, he does not infuse any dram of worth into the person, but only setteth forth and declareth that which is unto others. A curious picture praiseth a beautiful face, not by adding beauty to it, but by representing that which was in it before. The window, which lets in light into a house, does not benefit the light, but the house into which the light shineth: so our praising of God doth serve to quicken, comfort, and refresh ourselves, who have interest in so good a God; or to edify and encourage our brethren, that they may be ambitious to serve so honourable a Master: but they add no glory or lustre to God at all.[b]

23—27. (23) **sing,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xcvi. 1. (24) **glory,** for wh. the marvellous works find expression. (25) **feared,** not the fear of dread, but of reverence, and of love. (26) **idols,** vanities. **made the heavens,** this the proof of His living power. (27) **his place,** or sanctuary.[a]

Anthem of praise.—It is said that, when the sun is going out of sight, the pious Swiss herdsman of the Alps takes his alpine horn, and shouts loudly through it. "Praise ye the Lord." Then a brother herdsman on some distant slope takes up the echo, "Praise the Lord!" Soon another answers, still higher up the

mountains, till hill shouts to hill. and peak echoes to peak, the sublime anthem of praise to the Lord of all.

28—31. (28) **kindreds,** generations and families. **give,** *i.e.* ascribe. (29) **an offering,** the usual accompaniment of public worship.[a] **before him,** comp. Ps. xcvi. 8 (references to the temple are not suitable to this occasion). **beauty of holiness,** *with reverence and thanksgiving:*[b] or *in His sanctuary.*[c] (30) **stable,**[d] comp. Ps. xcvi. 10; it would seem that the idea is *moral,* rather than physical. (31) **nations,** heathen nations around.

The claims of God to the worship and homage of His creatures (*v.* 29).—What I have to demonstrate is—I. That God is entitled to the homage of His creatures, and claims it as proper and right. II. That these claims are made upon *us,* his intelligent creatures. It will therefore be necessary to show that we are capable of knowing God to all the extent necessary to excite in our minds the feelings of awe, reverence, and admiration, since these are essential to homage and worship. Also to prove that such claims are not only reasonable, but founded in justice and right. III. That the worship and homage required is such, that it not only does not degrade, but elevates the man that pays it; that it is not the hard requirement of despotism, but the righteous claim of infinite excellence; not the service of flattery and servility, but the free-will offering of a discerning and admiring mind.[e]

Helps to praise.—The sailors give a cheery cry as they weigh anchor; the ploughman whistles in the morning as he drives his team; the milkmaid sings her rustic song as she sets about her early task; when soldiers are leaving friends behind them they do not march out to the tune of the "Dead March in Saul," but to the quick notes of some lively air. A praising spirit would do for us all that their songs and music do for them; and if only we could determine to praise the Lord, we should surmount many a difficulty which our low spirits never would have been equal to, and we should do double the work which can be done if the heart be languid in its beatings, if we be crushed and trodden down in soul. As the evil spirit in Saul yielded in olden time to the influence of the harp of the son of Jesse, so would the spirit of melancholy often take flight from us if only we would take up the song of praise.[f]

32—36. (32) **sea roar, the Medit. fulness thereof,** a striking poetic repres. of the sea: a peculiarity wh. only the poetic soul would notice. (33) **trees of the wood,** with poss. allusion to *Kirjath-jearim,* "the city of woods," where the ark had rested. (34) **good,** Ps. cvii. 1. (35) **gather us,** there is no necessary reference to the captivity; David at this time was anxious about the consolidation of his kingdom. (36) **Amen,** comp. Ps. lxxii. 19, and observe how the congregation of Israel responded at renewals of covenant.[a]

Lasting praise.—Praise is the only part of duty in which we at present engage which is lasting. We pray, but there shall be a time when prayer shall offer its last litany; we believe, but there shall be a time when faith shall be lost in sight; we hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, but there shall be a time when hope lies down and dies, lost in the splendour of the fruition that God shall reveal. But praise goes singing into heaven, and is ready without a teacher to strike the harp that is waiting for it,

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of Righteousness may be more widely diffused on the world of men and angels."—*Salter.*

a Mal. iii. 8—10.

b So Syriac.

c So LXX.

d "Moved fr. its orbit."—*McCaul,* thro' *Wordsworth.*

vv. 28, 29. *Dr. E. Payson,* iii. 539.

v. 29. *T. Bisse, Beauty of Holiness; Dr. W. Vincent,* ii. 216; *R. Nares,* 109.

e J. Robinson.

"The psalmist speaks of singing to the name of the Lord, blessing, extolling, thanksgiving, exalting. Just as the stem which is full of sap throws out many branches, so the believer who is full of a spirit of praise will give vent to it in many different forms."—*P. B. Power.*

f P. B. Power.

a Jos. xxiv. 16—24.

It was the law, in some of the old monasteries, that the chanting of praise should never be interrupted, and that one choir of monks should relieve another in the holy service.

"Praise is the rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm the greater the rent."—*Bowes.*

"The Lord has many fine farms

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from which He receives but little rent. Thanksgiving is a good thing: thanksliving is better." — *P. Henry.*
"A line of praises is worth a leaf of prayer: and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning." —*J. Livingston.*
"Thy love has been as a shower; the returns but a dewdrop, and that dew-drop stained with sin."—*Evans.*
b W. M. Punshon.

David appoints priests, etc.

a Nu. xxviii. 3, 6.
b Ezr. iii. 11; 2 Chr. v. 13, vii. 3.

v. 43. *N. Parkhurst*, i. 167; *R. Hall*, v. 263; *N. Meeres*, 1.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

The fireside is a school of infinite importance; it is important because it is universal, and because the education it bestows, being woven in with the woof of childhood, gives form and colour to the whole texture of life.

d Arnott.

to transmit along the echoes of eternity the song of the Lamb. In the particoloured world in which we live there are days of various sorts and experiences, making up the aggregate of the Christian's life. There are waiting days, in which, because Providence fences us round, and it seems as if we cannot march, we cannot move, as though we must just wait to see what the Lord is about to do in us and for us; and there are watching days, when it behoves us never to slumber, but to be always ready for the attacks of our spiritual enemy; and there are warring days, when with nodding plume, and with ample armour, we must go forth to do battle for the truth; and there are weeping days, when it seems as if the fountains of the great deep within us were broken up, and as though, through much tribulation, we had to pass to heaven in tears. But these days shall all pass away by-and-by—waiting days all be passed, warring days all be passed, watching days all be passed; but—

> "Our days of praise shall ne'er be past
> While life, and thought, and being last,
> And immortality endures." *b*

37—43. (37) **left there,** for regular and permanent ministry. (38) **their brethren,** this is not grammatical, and suggests that a name must have fallen out of the text. (39) **Gibeon,** 1 Ki. iii. 4. (40) **morning and evening,** Ex. xxix. 38.*a* (41) **with them,** *i.e.* with Zadok and his sons, *v.* 39.*b* (42) **porters,** lit, *for the gate.* (43) **people,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. vi. 19, 20.

David's attention to his household (*v.* 43).—Personal religion was exemplified by David—I. By the work in which he had been engaged. 1. It was a glorious work; 2. It had been performed in a manner most acceptable to God. II. By the work to which he returned. He returned to bless his house, that is—1. To obtain blessing for them by his prayers; 2. To render himself a blessing by his conduct. Consider—(1) How highly we are privileged; (2) How we should improve our privileges.*c*

The Old and New Testament (*v.* 39).—No object can well be more dull and meaningless than the stained window of an ancient church, as long as you stand without and look toward a dark interior; but when you stand within the temple, and look through that window upon the light of heaven, the still, solemn forms that lie in it start into loveliness. We often meet a verse in the pages of the Old-Testament Scriptures very like those works of art. The beauty of holiness is in it,—put into it by the Spirit from the first,—and yet its beauty was not fully seen until the Sun of Righteousness arose, and the Israel of God, no longer kept in the outer court, entered into the rent veil, and, from the holy of holies, looked through the ancient record on an illumined heaven.*d*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

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David proposes to build a temple

a 2 Sa. xii. 1—25; 1 Ki. i. 8—45; 2

1—5. (1) **to Nathan,** comp. 2 Sa. vii. 1—17.*a* **curtains,** as of tent. (2) **do,** *etc.*, an answer given too hastily, on the assumption that such a purpose must be well pleasing to God. (3) **word . . came,** usual formula for Div. communications to the prophets. (4) **thou,** *etc.*, the point of the message is that,

though the work was to be done, David should not be the man to do it. See the turn of the sentence as given in 2 Sa. vii. 5. (5) **house,** permanent resting-place. **tent to tent,** comp. 2 Sa. vii. 6.

Real religion commands homage.—Though religion in its ordinary mode of exhibition commands but little respect, when it rises to the sublime, and is perceived to tincture and pervade the whole character, it seldom fails to draw forth the homage of mankind. The most hardened impiety and daring profligacy will find it difficult to despise the man who manifestly appears to walk with God, whose whole system of life is evidently influenced and directed by the power of the world to come. The ridicule cast on religious characters is not always directed towards their religion, but more often, perhaps, to the little it performs, contrasted with the loftiness of its pretensions; a ridicule which derives its force from the very sublimity of the principles which the profession of piety assumes.[b]

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Chr. ix. 29, xxix. 25; Ps. li., title.

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm, whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life coincident, exhibit lucid proof that he is honest in the sacred cause."—*Cowper.*

[b] *Robert Hall.*

6—10. (6) **spake I,** *etc.*, however proper the desire was, God declares that it was man's desire for Him, not His own desire for Himself. Comp. the demand for a king.[a] **judges,** in 2 Sa. vii. 7 it is "*tribes.*" (7) **sheepcote,**[b] or fold. Reference is to the temporary protection for flocks by night. (8) **a name,** as a valiant warrior, a wise judge, and a powerful king. (9) **a place,** a fixed, settled kingdom. Before the time of Dav. there had been constant changes. (10) **a house,** a family to reign after him.

God refuses to permit this

[a] 1 Sa. viii. 4, 5.

[b] "A round tower of rude construction, high walled, but open at the top, in wh. sheep are often enclosed at night, to protect them fr. wild beasts."—*Jamieson.*

The sheepcote (*v.* 7).—It is to be observed that the Oriental flocks, when they belong to nomades, are constantly kept in the open country, without being folded at night. This is also the case when the flocks belonging to a settled people are sent out to feed, to a distance of perhaps one, two, or three days' journey, in the deserts or waste lands, where they possess or claim a right of pasturage. This seems to have been the case with the flocks fed by David. And as such flocks are particularly exposed to the depredatory attacks of the regular nomades, who consider the flocks of a settled people as more than even usually fair prey, and contest their right to pasture in the deserts—the shepherds, when they are in a district particularly liable to danger from this cause, or from the attacks of wild beasts, and doubt whether themselves and their dogs can afford adequate protection, drive their flocks at nights into caves, or, where there are none, into uncovered enclosures, which have been erected for the purpose at suitable distances. These are generally of rude construction, but are sometimes high and well-built enclosures or towers (generally round), which are impregnable to any force of the depredators, when once the flock is within them. Such towers also occur in districts where there are only small dispersed settlements and villages, and serve the inhabitants not only for the protection of their flocks, but as fortresses in times of danger, in which they deposit their property, and perhaps, when the danger is imminent, their females and children. When no danger is apprehended, or none from which the protection of the shepherds and dogs is not sufficient, the flocks are only folded when collected to be shorn. They are then kept in a walled but still uncovered enclosure, partly to keep them together, but still more under the impression that the sweating and evaporation which

"Those low, flat buildings out on the sheltered side of the valley are sheep folds. They are called *mârâh*. . . . This is defended by a wide stone wall, covered all around with sharp thorns, wh. the prowling wolf will rarely attempt to scale."—*Thomson.*

"A man can even here be with God, so long as he bears God within him. We should be able to see without sadness our most holy wishes fade like sunflowers, because

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the sun above us still for ever beams, eternally makes new, and cares for all; and a man must not so much prepare himself for eternity, as plant eternity in himself; eternity, serene, pure, full of depth, full of light, and of all else."—*Richter.*

"He who would look with contempt upon the farmer's pursuit is not worthy the name of a man."—*Beecher.*

[c] *Dr. Kitto.*

result from their being crowded together previously to shearing, improve the quality of the wool. Those poor villagers who have no large flocks to send out to the wilderness pastures with a proper appointment of shepherds, but possess a few sheep and cattle, which feed during the day in the neighbouring commons under the care of women or children, and who cannot provide the necessary watch and protection for them at night, drive them home, and either fold them in a common enclosure, such as we have mentioned, in or near the villages, or pen them separately near their own dwellings. Pens or cotes of this class serve also for the lambs and calves while too young to be kept out with the flocks or to be trusted in a common enclosure. We have often seen a village with such pens or cotes near the dwellings, which are merely huts made of mats on a framework of palm-branches; which we conceive to answer well to the "tabernacles" (booths), "shepherds' cottages," and other humbler habitations noticed in Scripture. This village is of a class belonging to a people (Arabs) who, like the Israelites, have relinquished the migratory life, but who still give their principal attention to pasturage, and do some little matters in the way of culture. It is possible that the villages of the Hebrews, when they first began to settle in Palestine, were of a very similar description.[c]

God promises the temple shall be built by Solomon

v. 11. *T. Bradbury,* ii. 369.

"Measure not men by Sundays, without regarding what they do all the week after."—*Fuller.*

11—15. (11) **thy seed,** indefinitely, one of thy sons, not yet indicating wh. of them. (12) **a house,** or temple. (13) **his father,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. vii. 14, 15; observing what is here omitted. **as I took,** *etc.*, alluding to Saul. (14) **for evermore,** in a comparative sense. (15) **vision,** *see v.* 3.

The word of a king.—Charles V. having given his promise and safe conduct to Luther, to prevail on him to come to Worms, was afterwards urged to violate it, by arresting Luther, on this ground, that "he was a man of that character to whom he was not obliged to keep his word." To which he replied, "When good faith may be banished from all the earth, it ought to be found with an emperor." How much more is this true of the King of kings.

David's prayer and thanksgiving

"How hard it is to revive a fire that is nearly gone out; you stir it, you put fresh kindling upon it, you blow it; and with all your pains it sometimes defies you. Is it not so in trying to revive religion in a heart or a church where it has almost expired?"—*John Bate.*

16—19. (16) **sat before,** prob. before the ark within the tabernacle. The expression *came* indicates that he left his own house. (17) **estate,** *etc.*, comp. note on 2 Sa. vii. 19. (18) **honour,** *etc.*, either the honour done to Thy servant; or, for the glorifying of Thee. (19) **servant's sake,** comp. 2 Sa. vii. 21.

Oriental ceremony (*v.* 16).—The ceremonial of the Orientals does not end with the introduction of persons to one another, but continues during the whole visit. The most scrupulous attention is paid by all parties to the established tokens of respect; the posture of the body, the part of the room, and other circumstances, are all regulated by custom, to whose imperious dictates they have implicitly submitted from the remotest antiquity. One of the postures by which a person testifies his respect for a superior is by sitting upon his heels, which is considered as a token of great humility. In this manner, says Dr. Pococke, resting on their hams, sat the attendants of the English consul, when he waited on the caia of the pacha of Tripoli. It was in this humble posture, probably, that David, the king of Israel, sat before the Lord in the sanctuary, when he

blessed Him for His gracious promise concerning his family; half sitting and half kneeling, so as to rest the body upon the heels. This entirely removes the ground of perplexity, which some expositors have felt, in their attempts to elicit a meaning from the phrase, sitting before the Lord, at once consistent with the majesty of Jehovah, and the humility of the worshipper: for this attitude expressed among the Orientals the deepest humility, and, by consequence, was every way becoming a worshipper of the true God.[a]

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"When love begins to sicken and decay it useth an enforceth ceremony." — *Shakespeare.*

a Paxton.

20—24. (20) **beside thee,** Ex. xx. 3. (21) **redeemed,** *etc.*, Ex. xv. (22) **their God,** in special covenant relations. (23) **thing,** *etc.*, declared by Nathan. In this Dav. expresses full acquiescence in the Div. will. (24) **even,** or *he is indeed* a God to Israel.[a]

God's relation to His people (*v.* 24).—Let us, for the illustrating of these words, consider—I. The relation which God bears to His people. 1. He has chosen them out of the world, which lieth in wickedness; 2. He has given Himself to them in a peculiar way; 3. He avows that relation to them before the whole universe. II. Inquire what, under that relation, we may expect at His hands. 1. The care of His providence; 2. The communications of His grace; 3. The manifestations of His love; 4. The possession of His glory. III. What, under that relation, He is entitled to expect from us. 1. That we "be a people to Him;" 2. That we give ourselves to Him, as He has given Himself to us. Conclude with two proposals:—(1) That we, at this very hour, accept Jehovah as our God; (2) That we now consecrate ourselves to Him as His people.[b]

a "The Lord of hosts, the God whom Is. worships, is indeed by His kindness and care a God to Israel."—*Spk. Com.*

True religion shows its influence in every part of our conduct; it is like the sap of a living tree, which penetrates the most distant boughs.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

Trust in God.—Wesley, preaching at Doncaster, said, a poor Romanist woman, having broken her crucifix, went to her priest, frequently crying out, "Now I have broken my crucifix, I have nothing to trust in but the great God." Wesley exclaimed, "What a mercy she had a great God to trust in!" A Romanist present was powerfully affected. "The great God to trust in" touched his heart. He was very deeply convinced of his need of salvation, and joined the Methodist society, and became an ornament to religion.

"I believe we cannot live better than in seeking to become better, nor more agreeably than having a clear conscience." — *Socrates.*

25—27. (25) **a house,** family or dynasty. (26) **thou art God,** therefore I may fully trust Thy word. (27) **let it please,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. vii. 29.

Living on a promise.—A lady gives the following statement: "I went just before Christmas to see a young friend, who, although surrounded by all the luxuries which wealth can give, was languishing with disease. As words were spoken of the beautiful gifts which devoted friends were expecting to make her, she said with great earnestness, 'There is only one thing which I want; if I have that I shall care for nothing else.' 'What is that gift for which you long?' I inquired. She said, 'I want my father to give me a promise that he will take me South; then I shall escape the cold, and I know I shall get well. Oh how I should live on that promise! The hours and the days would pass so quickly, I should forget all my weariness and pain.' I thought: Dear girl, your father may give you his promise, and not be able to keep it; he may be snatched away by death, or riches may take to themselves wings and fly away.

v. 27. *T. Blackley,* ii. 97.

"Seeming devotion does but gild the knave, that's nei her faithful, honest, just, nor brave; but where religion does with virtue join, it makes a hero like an angel shine."—*Waller.*

"Piety is a kind of modesty. It makes us cast down our thoughts, just as modesty makes us cast down

B.C. *cir.* 1042.

our eyes in presence of whatever is forbidden."—*Joubert.*

But you could 'live on your father's promise;' and how unwilling I am to live on the words of promise which my Father in heaven gives! He whose word cannot be broken, whose promise cannot fail! Then came to mind the sweet words of Dr. Hamilton, written many years ago: 'One single promise of Jesus Christ accredited in the heart, unites the soul to God. The graft has taken, and the soul abides as a branch in the vine.'"

B.C. *cir.* 1040.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

David's wars

1—8. (1) **smote,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. viii. 1. **Gath,**[a] Jos. xi. 22. **her towns,** surrounding and dependent villages. Lit. *her daughters.* (2) **Moab,** 2 Sa. viii. 2. (3) **Hadarezer,** 2 Sa. viii. 3. (4) **houghed,** cut the sinews of the ham.[b] (5) **Syrians,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. viii. 5. (6) **gifts,** or tribute. (7) **shields of gold,** plated with gold. (8) **Tibhath and Chun,** comp. Beta and Berothai of 2 Sa. viii. 8, prob. other names of the same towns.

Note on the word hough (*v.* 4).—"He houghed (*i.e.* cut the houghs of) their horses" (2 Sa. viii. 4; 1 Ch. xviii. 4). Anglo-Saxon, *hoh.* "Hough" is the back of the knee; "hock," the joint of a horse's leg, from the knee to the fetlock (*Wedgwood*). "Hox" is used by Shakespeare for to "hamstring," and so it is now in Sussex; also to cut the sinew of a rabbit's leg and put the other foot through in order to hang it up. See also Jos. xi. 9.

a "Abishai was the principal instrument in the conquest of Edom; it was, however, ascribed to Joab, as generalissimo of the forces (1 Ki. xi. 15, 16), and to David as the king under whose auspices the war was carried on. *b Roberts.*

Tou sends tribute; Edom subdued

9—13. (9) **Tou,** the Toi of 2 Sa. viii. 9. (10) **Hadoram,** or *Joram.* (11) **dedicated,** as materials for the proposed temple. (12) **Abishai,**[a] the honour of this is ascribed to Dav., 2 Sa. viii. 13. **Edomites,** called the Syrians in the Bk. of Sam. (13) **garrisons,** to keep the country in subjection.

Eastern manners (*vv.* 9, 10).—Here, again, we have a beautiful and simple picture of Eastern manners. Tou, the heathen king, sent a messenger to compliment David on his success over his enemies. Who, in the East, has not witnessed similar things? Has a man gained a case in a court of law; has he been blessed by the birth of a son; has he given his daughter in marriage; has he gained a situation under government; has he returned from a voyage or a journey, or finished a successful speculation; then his friends and neighbours send messengers to congratulate him—to express the joy they feel in his prosperity; "so much so that, had it come to themselves, their pleasure could not have been greater."[b]

a "It would seem that we ought to read Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech (1 Sa. xxii. 20)."—*Spk. Com.*

David's chief officers

14—17. (14) **executed,** both gave sentences and had power to inflict the punishments; or giving judgment may be put. as the king's chief duty, for the whole of his work of ruling. (15) **the host,** or army. **recorder,** or chronicler, historian. (16) **Abimelech,** or *Ahimelech.*[a] **Shavsha,** or Seraiah.[b] (17) **chief,** heads, or princes; chief officers in the palace.

Belief in the superintendence of God.—When any one acknowledges a moral governor of the world; perceives that domestic and social relations are perpetually operating, and seem intended to operate, to retain and direct men in the path of duty: and feels that the voice of conscience, the peace of heart which results from a course of virtue, and the consolations of devotion,

b 2 Sa. viii. 17.

are ever ready to assume their office, as our guides and aids in the conduct of all our actions; he will probably be willing to acknowledge also that the means of a moral government of each individual are not wanting: and will no longer be oppressed or disturbed by the apprehension that the superintendence of the world may be too difficult for its Ruler, and that any of His subjects and servants may be overlooked. He will no more fear that the moral than that the physical laws of God's creation should be forgotten in any particular case; and as he knows that every sparrow which falls to the ground contains in its structure innumerable marks of the Divine care and kindness, he will be persuaded that every man, however apparently humble and insignificant, will have his moral being dealt with according to the laws of God's wisdom and love; will be enlightened, supported, and raised, if he use the appointed means which God's administration of the world of moral light and good offers to his use.[c]

B.C. 1040.

"The English laws punish vice; the Chinese laws do more, they reward virtue."—*Goldsmith.*

"When the state is most corrupt, then the laws are most multiplied."—*Tacitus.*

c Whewell.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1037.

David's messengers to Ammon ill-treated

1—5. (1) **after this,** the precise chronological order of these events as given in the Chronicles should not be assumed. **Nahash,** 1 Sa. xi. 1; 2 Sa. x. 1. (2) **shewed kindness,**[a] this was prob. during Dav.'s exile, Nahash being an enemy of Saul's. **comfort him,** he sent ambassadors with messages of condolence. (3) **to search,** *etc.*, as spies, to prepare the way for the seizure of the country.[b] (4) **shaved,**[c] partly, comp. 2 Sa. x. 4. **buttocks,** "the rump, or protuberant part of the body behind."[d] (5) **at Jericho,**[e] selected as being a border city.

Homiletic hints.—Gratitude not absorbed by death (*v.* 2). Kind and seasonable expressions of sympathy (*v.* 2). Ungenerous suspicions, betrayals of character (*v.* 3). Intended kindnesses disgracefully recompensed (*v.* 4). Thoughtful consideration for the respect of others (*v.* 5).

Bearding a bishop.—Guillaume Duprat, Bishop of Clermont, who assisted at the Council of Trent, and built the college of the Jesuits at Paris, was remarkable for the fineness of his beard. It was, indeed, deemed too good a beard for a bishop; and the canons of his cathedral, in full chapter assembled, came to the barbarous resolution of shaving him. Accordingly, when he next came to the choir, the dean, the *prevot*, and the *chantre*, approached, with scissors and razors, soap basin, and warm water. At sight of these implements the bishop took to his heels, and escaped to his castle of Beauregard, about two leagues from Clermont, where he fell ill from vexation, and died. During his sickness he made a vow never to set foot in Clermont, where they had offered him so villanous an insult: and to be revenged he exchanged his bishopric with Cardinal Salviati, nephew of Pope Leo X., who was so young that he had not a hair upon his chin. Duprat, however, repented of the exchange before his death, and wrote a letter to Salviati on the subject, in which he quoted these lines of Martial:

Sed tu nec propera, brevibus nec crede capillis,
Tardaque pro tanto munere barba veni.[f]

The power of kindness.—I remember once a valued friend of

a "A Jewish tradition relates that on the slaughter of Dav.'s family by the neighbouring king of Moab, the one of his brothers who escaped found shelter with Nahash."—*Stanley.*

b Illus. by knowledge gained by German officers of the French territory prior to the Franco-German war.

c "It is very difficult for us to realise the intense appreciation of, and respect for, the beard wh. is entertained among the Persians, Arabians, and other bearded nations.

d Lib. Dict.

e Jos. v. 10, 13, vi. 1, etc.

f Percy Anec.

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"Sweet as refreshing dews or summer showers to the long-parching thirst of drooping flowers; grateful as fanning gales to fainting swains; and soft as trickling balm to bleeding pains, are thy kind words."—*Gay.*

"There was an officer in the city of Rome who was appointed to have his doors always open, in order to receive any Roman citizen who applied to him for help. Just so the ear of the Lord Jesus is ever open to the cry of all who want grace and mercy."—*Ryle.*

g Champneys.

Ammon hires Syria to war with David

a "One universal feeling of indignation was roused throughout Israel, and all classes supported the king in his determination to avenge this unprovoked insult on the Heb. nation."—*Jamieson.*

b For practice of hiring mercenary troops, see 1 Ki. xv. 18; 2 Ki vii. 6; 2 Chr. xxv. 6.

c *Aram - beth - Rehob*, 2 Sa. x. 6.

d Ex. xiv. 7; 1 Ki. x. 26; 2 Chr xii. 3, xiv. 9.

mine, a barrister, now passed away, who spent his Sundays in visiting a hospital. He told me that on one occasion he sat down by the bedside of one of the very poorest, the most ignorant, and, without using the word in any offensive manner, one of the very lowest men he had ever seen in his life—a man whose English, had it been taken down, would have been the most complete and perfect dislocation of the Queen's English that he ever heard. No word seemed to be in its right place. It seemed as if that which should have been a jointed and vertebrated sentence had been separated at every joint, and thrown together anyhow. My friend was a man of the most tender spirit—a man whose tender spirit radiated from one of the most striking faces I ever saw; and I can well understand how he looked when he sat down by that poor man's bed. He began first, as all should who visit the sick, to break ground on temporal matters, to sympathise with them on that which they can understand so well—their bodily sufferings—to show that we are not indifferent to what they are suffering as men; and then after speaking a few kind words, he was proceeding to say something further for his Master, whom he so dearly loved, when he saw the man's face begin to work convulsively. The muscles quivered, and at last, lifting up the sheet, and drawing down his head, he threw the sheet over his face, burst into a violent flood of tears and sobbed aloud. My friend wisely waited till this storm of grief was passed, and then the poor fellow emerged from under the clothes, his face bearing the traces of tears that had flowed down it. When he was able to speak, my friend asked him—"What is it that has so touched you? I hope that I have not said anything that was painful to you. What can have moved you so much?" And as well as the man could sob out, he sobbed out these words: "Sir, you are the first man that ever spoke a kind word to me since I was born, and I can't stand it."*g*

6–9. (6) **odious,**[a] lit. *to stink.* **thousand,** *etc.*,[b] supposed to equal some £342,100. The narrative in Samuel does not give the *price paid.* **Mesopotamia,** Heb. *Aram-naharaim*:[c] Syria of the two rivers. (7) **hired . . chariots,** the number given here is beyond usual proportions.[d] Poss. the term equals *cavalry*, comp. 2 Sa. x. 6. **Medeba,** mod. *Mâdeba*, near Heshbon. Nu. xxi. 30; Jos. xiii. 16. (8) **sent Joab,** to relieve the city. This was the object of the first campaign. (9) **in array,** 2 Sa. x. 9. **in the field,** so hemming Joab in. The kings mentioned here are the Syrian allies.

One false step leads on another.—I. Here is a war, like many others, commenced by the evil-doer. II. Here is a war that might have been avoided by an ample and honourable apology. III. Here is a war that ended disastrously for the ill-doers.

Warriors (*v.* 7, *comp. with* 1 Sam. x. 6).—In the first text the children of Ammon are said to have hired 32,000 chariots, which seems an incredible number. However, the original is a collective noun, meaning *cavalry* or *riders.* Then the meaning is, they hired 32,000 auxiliaries, who usually were mounted on chariots or horses, but who sometimes fought on foot, which makes it agree with the latter text, in which the Syrian auxiliaries are stated to amount exactly to 32,000, besides 1,000 whom they hired of the king of Maachah, and who very likely were footmen.—*Treatment of offences.*—David was deaf to the railing

of his enemies, and as a dumb man, in whose mouth were no reproofs. Socrates, when he was abused in a comedy, laughed at it, when Polyargus, not able to bear such an indignity, went and hanged himself. Augustus slighted the satires and bitter invectives which the Pasquins of that time invented against him; and when the senate would have further informed him of them, he would not hear them. Thus, the manlier any man is, the milder and readier he is to pass by an offence as not knowing of it, or not troubled at it; an argument that there is much of God in him (if he do it from a right principle), who bears with our infirmities, and forgives our trespasses, beseeching us to be reconciled. When any provoke us, we used to say, "We will be even with him." But there is a way whereby we may not only be even, but above him, and that is, forgive him.[d]

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"That king shall best govern his realm, that reigneth over his people as a father doth over his children."—*Agesilaus.*

d Spencer.

Joab defeats Ammon and Syria

10—15. (10) **choice,** *etc.*, as a skilful general Joab decided in wh. direction would be the chief stress of battle, and made due provision for it. (11) **Abishai,** 2 Sa. ii. 18.[a] (12) **Syrians,** these mercenary troops, who were well armed, warlike, and fresh for the battle. (13) **be of good courage,** this inspiring address indicates the faith and piety of the commander. (14) **drew nigh,** prob. getting the advantage of attack. (15) **children of Ammon,** outside the walls of Medeba.

The Christian call to arms (*v.* 13).—I. The enemies by which the peace and prosperity of our homes are threatened. 1. Ungodly pleasures; 2. Injudicious reading; 3. Sinful fashions; 4. Worldly conformity. II. The spirit in which these enemies are to be met. 1. Exalted courage; 2. Self-denying patriotism; 3. Humble reliance upon God.

Need of our common brotherhood.—The race of mankind would perish, did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head, till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid, have a right to ask it from their fellow-mortals; no one who holds the power of granting, can refuse it without guilt.[b]—*Roman charioteers.*—Both horse and chariot races, but especially the latter, were favourite diversions among the Romans; and in order that they might enjoy them at their ease, there was an enclosed course immediately adjoining the city, called the Circus, although, in point of fact, its form was oval. It was rather more than a mile in circumference: was surrounded with seats in the form of an amphitheatre, with three tiers of galleries; and was calculated to contain 150,000, or, as some suppose, more than 250,000 spectators. In the centre there was a wall twelve feet in breadth and four in height, round which the race was performed; and at one end there stood a triumphal arch, through which the successful charioteer drove, amid the plaudits of the assembly. The horses were restrained by a chain across the course, until the signal was given for starting. The race was generally either decided in one heat or five, or sometimes seven times round the course, which was a distance of four English miles. Four chariots usually started together, the drivers of which were distinguished by dresses of different colours, each of which had its partisans, who betted largely on their favourite; for it was neither the charioteer nor his horses that interested them, but the colour which they adopted; and so far was this carried, that the

a 1 Chr. xviii. 12.

"Not parties, but principles. Let us be of no party but God's party, and use all other agencies as we use railroad cars, travelling upon one train as far as it will take us in the right direction, and then leaving it for another."—*Beecher.*

"The noblest motive is the public good."—*Virgil.*

b Sir W. Scott.

"As to public offences, they are to be reproved as public as the offence was committed, that is, in the presence of those who witnessed the obnoxious act, and at the time when and in the place where it was committed; with this salvo, however, that where it is impossible, from the nature of the case, to rebuke the act on the spot, or where the offence

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people were actually divided into parties; who espoused the pretensions of the different liveries with such warmth, that all Rome was at one time agitated with the disputes of the green and red factions. The chariots, as they are usually called, were nothing more than uncovered two-wheeled cars, high and circular in front, and open behind. They were usually drawn by three or four horses abreast, which the driver guided in a standing position, with the reins round his body. This practice caused many accidents, for the course being narrow, the turnings sharp, and frequent, and both crossing and jostling allowed, the carriages were often overturned.[c]

16—19. (16) **beyond the river,** the Euphrates. **Shophach,** 2 Sa. x. 16. (17) **upon them,** comp. 2 Sa. x. 17 : came to *Helam.* This is the better reading, but the place Helam is unknown. (18) **slew,** *etc.*, for the numbers comp. the more prob. account in 2 Sa. x. 18.[a] (19) **servants,** or tributaries.

The defeat and humiliation of the helpers of the wicked (*v.* 19).—I. The facts of the history before us. 1. The Ammonites levied an unjust war against David ; 2. The Syrians, envious of David's prosperity, aided the children of Ammon ; 3. They were ignominiously defeated, forced to sue for peace, and became subject to David. II. The lessons of which these facts remind us. 1. Man is a rebel against the great King ; 2. He calls to his aid science, art, music, etc. ; 3. The great King will conquer, and render the aids of rebellion His helpers in extending the glories of His government.

Weakness of wickedness.—

If weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness ; that plea, therefore,
With God or man will gain thee no remission.[b]

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

B.C. *cir.* 1035.

1—3. (1) **kings go out,** *see* 2 Sa. xi. 1. **wasted,** or ravaged, destroying the dwellings and growing and stored crops. **Rabbah,**[a] 2 Sa. xi. 1. (2) **took the crown,** 2 Sa. xii. 30. (3) **cut them,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. xii. 31. This cruel treatment it is impossible for us to approve.

An incorruptible crown.—A French officer who was a prisoner upon his parol at Reading met with a Bible : he read it, and was so impressed with its contents, that he was convinced of the folly of sceptical principles and of the truth of Christianity, and resolved to become a Protestant. When his gay associates rallied him for taking so serious a turn, he said in his vindication, "I have done no more than my old school-fellow Bernadotte, who has become a Lutheran." "Yes ; but he became so," said his associates, "to obtain a crown." "My motive," said the Christian officer "is the same ; we only differ as to the place. The object of Bernadotte is to obtain a crown in Sweden : mine is to obtain a crown in heaven."—*Estimating a crown.*—Inside those iron gratings that protect the ancient regalia of our kingdom, vulgar curiosity sees nothing but a display of jewels. Its stupid eyes are dazzled by the gems that stud the crown and the sceptre.

is of a flagrant nature, and an injury to society at large, it must be done in some other way." — *G. W. Harvey.*

[c] *Percy Anec.*

the Syrians become subject to David

"Every misery that I miss is a new mercy."

[a] "Either the text in one of the books is corrupt (*Keil, Davidson*), or the accounts must be combined (*Kennicott, Houbigant, Calmet*)." — *Jamieson.*

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge." — *Shakespeare.*

[b] *Milton.*

conquest of Ammon

[a] "The metropolis of Ammon, De. iii. 11 : Jos. xiii. 25. In later times it received the name Philadelphia fr. Ptolemy Philadelphus; by this name it is known in Josephus. Called Ammân now. There are extensive ruins in an elevated valley on the banks of the stream Moiet Ammân, which, after a short course, flows

The unreflecting multitude fix their thoughts and waste their admiration on these. They go away to talk of their beauty, perhaps to covet their possession; nor do they estimate the value of the crown but by the value which its pearls and rubies and diamonds might fetch in the market. The eye of a patriot gazing thoughtfully in on these relics of former days is all but blind to what attracts the gaping group. The admiration is reserved for other and nobler objects. He looks with deep and meditative interest on that rim of gold, not for its intrinsic value, but because it once encircled the brow of Scotland's greatest king, the hero of her independence—Robert Bruce. Regarded in some such light, estimated by the sufferings endured for it, how great the value of that crown which Jesus wears![b]

4—8. (4) **Gezer,** called *Gob* in 2 Sa. xxi. 19.[a] **Sibbechai,** ch. xi. 29. **Sippai,** or *Saph.*[b] **they,** *etc.*, i.e. the Philistines. (5) **Elhanan,** 2 Sa. xxi. 19; *see* 1 Chr. xi. 26. **Lahmi,** *see* 2 Sa. xxi. 19, noticing words in italics. (6) **Gath,** Jos. xi. 22. **man,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. xxi. 20. (7) **Shimea,** 1 Sa. xvi. 9. (8) **the giant,** *Rapha*, see marg. 2 Sa. xxi. 18.

Noted giants.—*Emperor Maximen*, A.D. 35, 8-ft. 6-in., used his wife's bracelet as a thumb ring. *Gabara*, an Arabian, described by Pliny, 9-ft. 9-in. *John Middleton*, born at Hale, in Lancashire, in 1578, called "The Child of Hale," 9-ft. 3-in. *Patrick Cotter*, the famous Irish giant, born 1761, 8-ft. 7-in., shoe 17-in. long. *Big Sam*, porter to the Prince of Wales—George IV.—near 8-ft. There is a skeleton in the Museum of Trin. Col., Dublin, 8ft. 6in. That of *O'Brien*, in Museum of College of Surgeons of England, is 8-ft. 2-in. Another, in Museum in Bonn, 8-ft. The body was in each case from 2 to 3-in. longer. Thus O'Brien measured 8-ft. 4-in. after death.—*A lesson to conquerors.*—When Edward the Confessor had entered England from Normandy to recover the kingdom, and was ready to give the Danes battle, one of his captains assured him of victory, adding, "We will not leave one Dane alive." To which Edward replied. "God forbid that the kingdom should be recovered for me, who am but one man, by the death of thousands. No; I will rather lead a private life, unstained by the blood of my fellow-men, than be a king by such a sacrifice." Upon which he broke up his camp, and again retired to Normandy, until he was restored to his throne without bloodshed.[c]

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into the Jabbok."—*Ayre.*

"God asks not what, but whence thy work is? from the fruit He turns His eye away, to prove the inmost root.'"—*French.*

b Dr. Guthrie.

giants of Philistia killed

a "As Gezer occurs frequently, whereas we nowhere else hear of Gob, it is prob. that Gezer is the right reading."—*Spk. Com.*

Jos. x. 33, xii. 12; 2 Sa. v. 25.

b 2 Sa. xxi. 18.

When Thomas Hooker was dying, one present said to him, "You are going to receive the reward of your labours." He replied, "I am going to receive mercy."

c Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY FIRST.

B.C. 1017.

David numbers Israel

1—4. (1) **Satan,**[a] *the adversary.* Comp. 2 Sa. xxiv. 1. **provoked,** not in the sense of *made angry*, but urged. The incitement was *vainglory*, and the time prob. when the enemies were all subdued, and the kingdom extended to wide limits.[b] (2) **rulers,** *etc.*, called captains of the host in Samuel. **number Israel,** to do this was not in itself wrong, everything depended on the design of taking the census, and on the spirit in which it was done. (3) **why,** *etc.*, Joab feared more the penalty that would follow than the sin itself. (4) **went throughout,** 2 Sa. xxiv. 5—8.

Practical advice.—One day, as an ancient king of Tartary was riding with his officers of state, they met a dervise, crying aloud,

a Job i. 7; Zech. iii. 1.

"It is alleged by some critics that this introduction of Satan is an evidence of a later date than is commonly assigned to the

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Chronicles."—*Wordsworth.*

b "This attempt to take the census was not unnaturally suggested by the increase of his power, but it implied a confidence and pride alien to the spirit inculcated on the kings of the chosen people."—*Stanley.*

"Counsel and conversation is a good second education, improves all the virtue and corrects all the vice of the former, and of nature itself."—*Clarendon.*

c *Lady M. W. Montague.*

David confesses his sin

a "The omission of Benj. must be ascribed to a determination on the part of Joab to frustrate the king's intention, whereby he might hope to avert God's wrath from the people."—*Spk. Com.*

"As in the order followed, Judah and Benj. were the *last tribes* to be taken, Dav. may have come to a better mind before it was completed."—*Wordsworth* and *Jamieson.*

b 2 Sa. xxiv. 10.

"If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can

"To him that will give me a hundred dinars, I will give a piece of good advice." The king, attracted by this strange declaration, stopped, and said to the dervise, "What advice is this that you offer for a hundred dinars?" "Sire," replied the dervise, "I shall be most thankful to tell you, as soon as you order the money to be paid me." The king, expecting to hear something extraordinary, ordered the money to be given to the dervise at once. On receiving which, he said, "Sire, my advice is, begin nothing without considering what the end may be." The officers of the state, smiling at what they thought ridiculous advice, looked at the king, who they expected would be so enraged at this insult, as to order the dervise to be severely punished. The king, seeing the amusement and surprise which this advice had occasioned, said, "I see nothing to laugh at in the advice of this dervise, but, on the contrary, I am persuaded that if it were more frequently practised men would escape many calamities Indeed, so convinced am I of the wisdom of this maxim, that I shall have it engraved on my plate, and written on the walls of my palace, so that it may be ever before me." The king, having thanked the dervise for his advice, proceeded towards his palace; and, on his arrival, he ordered the chief bey to see that the maxim was engraved on his plate, and on the walls of his palace.*c*

5—8. (5) **sum,** of all the lists added together. Comp. the number given in book of Samuel. (6) **Levi,** according to precedent given Nu. i. 47—49.*a* **word,** or command. (7) **displeased,** Heb. *evil in his eyes.* (8) **have sinned,** *etc.,* penitence and confession were not permitted to remove penalty.*b*

Practical advice.—Some time after this occurrence (*see last illustration*), one of the nobles of the court, a proud, ambitious man, resolved to destroy the king, and place himself on the throne. In order to accomplish his diabolical purpose, he secured the confidence of one of the king's surgeons, to whom he gave a poisoned lancet, saying, "If you will bleed the king with this lancet, I will give you ten thousand pieces of gold; and, when I ascend the throne, you shall be my vizier. This base surgeon, dazzled by such brilliant prospects, wickedly assented to the proposal. An opportunity of effecting his evil design soon occurred. The king sent for this man to bleed him: he put the poisoned lancet into a side pocket, and hastened into the king's presence. The arm was tied, and the fatal lancet was about to be plunged into the vein, when suddenly the surgeon's eye read this maxim at the bottom of the basin—"Begin nothing without considering what the end may be." He immediately paused, as he thought within himself, "If I bleed the king with this lancet, he will die, and I shall be seized and put to a cruel death; then of what use will all the gold in the world be to me?" Then, returning the lancet to his pocket, he drew forth another. The king, observing this, and perceiving that he was much embarrassed, asked why he changed his lancet so suddenly. He stated that the point was broken; but the king, doubting his statement, commanded him to show it. This so agitated him, that the king felt assured all was not right. He said, "There is treachery in this; tell me instantly what it means, or your head shall be severed from your body." The surgeon, trembling with fear, promised to relate all to the king.

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if he would only pardon his guilt. The king assented, and the surgeon related the whole matter, and acknowledged that had it not been for the words in the basin, he should have used the fatal lancet. The king summoned his court, and ordered the traitor to be executed. Then, turning to his officers of state, he said, "You now see that the advice of the dervise, at which you laughed, is most valuable: it has saved my life. Search out this dervise, that I may amply reward him for his wise maxim."[c]

easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching."—*Shakespeare.*

[c] *Lady M. W. Montague.*

9—13. (9) **Gad,** 1 Sa. xxii. 5. (10) **offer thee,** Heb. *stretch out* to thee. **choose,** his choice would indicate what was really the attitude of his mind. (11) **choose thee,** Heb. *take to thee,* one or other you must have. (12) **three years' famine,** comp. seven years of 2 Sa. xxiv. 13. Each of these punishments involved a reduction of the population, wh. would make the new census quite worthless. **advise thyself,** consider, come to some judgment. (13) **a great strait,**[a] very difficult to decide, and no way to escape one form of the evil. **of the Lord,** the decision of a man in a right mind, who had abundantly experienced the Divine mercy.

Gad, the seer, reproves David

[a] 2 Sa. xxiv. 14.

Gad an emblem of the true minister (*v.* 12).—His message was—I. Divine. So is the Gospel message. Of which there is evidence drawn from—1. The facts of history; 2. Its congruity with the spiritual constitution of man; 3. Experience of those who experience its power. II. An appeal to choice: "advise thyself." 1. You can reject it; 2. You can accept it. III. Was to be accounted for: "what word," etc. 1. Gad was responsible for its delivery; 2. David was responsible for its results.—(*Homilist.*)—*David falling into the hand of God* (*v.* 13).—Regard David's exclamation — I. As indicating what is a natural tendency in all souls, trust. II. As revealing the true spirit of Life, trust in God. 1. His preference was right; 2. It was expedient. Trust in man—(*a*) Destroys freedom; (*b*) Degrades the character; (*c*) Issues in disappointment. III. As foreshadowing the inevitable doom of all. In one of two ways we must fall into God's hands. 1. Voluntarily, by the influences of grace; or, 2. Compulsorily, by the forces of justice.—*Homilist.*

Danger of beginnings.—For hundreds of years the north of Holland has been threatened with submersion by the Northern Ocean. Ramparts have been raised along the whole coast, in the form of massive embankments, to keep the water out. Walking within this lofty embankment, you hear the sea roar and rave without, high above your head. In seasons of storm, the waves have been blown in upon the ramparts higher and higher, until they surged in over the top, washed an opening through a hole which a handful of earth might have stopped, and soon tore it into an immense break, through which "Old Ocean" deluged half a kingdom. At first, a child might have stopped the leak; now millions cannot arrest the break, or rescue the grassy meadows from their watery desolation. Whenever the storm arises, and the waves approach the top, the alarm-bell is rung in every city and hamlet far and near; multitudes rush to the rescue, to raise the walls by means of wicker-work and loam. It is a symbol of the human heart.

vv. 9—14. *R. D. Boullier,* 291.

v. 13. *J. Milner,* iii. 376.

"Nothing is less sincere than our manner of asking and of giving advice. He who asks advice would seem to have a respectful deference for the opinion of his friend, whilst yet he only aims at getting his own approved of, and his friend responsible for his conduct. On the other hand, he who gives it repays the confidence supposed to be placed in him by a seemingly disinterested zeal, whilst he seldom means anything by the advice he gives but his own interest or reputation."—*Rochefoucauld.*

"They fall deepest into hell who fall backwards into hell. None so near heaven as those that are convinced of sin; none so near hell as those who have quenched conviction."—*Bunyan.*

14—17. (14) **pestilence,** the peculiar form of it is not known.[a] Eastern lands seem peculiarly exposed to sweeping, desolating

God smites Israel with a pestilence

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plagues. (15) **sent an angel**, 2 Sa. xxiv. 16, *i.e.* the plague extended thro' the country, and came at length to the capital. (15) **repented him**,[b] so mingled *mercy* with judgment, *v.* 8. **Ornan**, also called *Araunah*, *Aranyah*, and *Haornah*. (16) **saw the angel**, as in a vision; and a fearful vision it must have been to him. **the elders**,[c] who were in attendance on the king. **sackcloth**, Ge. xxxvii. 34. (17) **sheep**, creature often treated as emblem of innocence.

David and Israel (*v.* 17).—Wisdom of David's act, *v.* 13. God's hand safest to hold the rod—hand of King, Master, Father. I. The progressive course of sin. 1. Temptation, *v.* 1; 2. Transgression, *v.* 2; 3. Punishment, *vv.* 10—12. II. The progressive course of reconciliation. 1. The messenger, *v.* 9; 2. Conviction, *v.* 8; 3. Penitence, *v.* 16; 4. Acceptance, *vv.* 18, 26, 27; 5. Praise, *v.* 24. III. Underlying truths. 1. Though tempted, sin is man's own act; 2. Our sin affects others; 3. Though sin be pardoned, it leaves terrible scars behind.[d]

David's confession (*v.* 17).—David, when he numbered the people, though it is expressed that Satan provoked him thereunto, and though David probably might be sensible of his temptation, yet he never accused the devil, but took all the guilt upon himself. Good reason! Satan hath no impulsive power; he may strike fire till he be weary (if his malice can be weary), except man's corruption brings the tinder, the match cannot be lighted.[e]—*Insidious influence of sin.*—What used to be called a death-ring was often employed in the Italian states three or four hundred years ago. If a man hated another, and desired to murder him, he would present him with one of them. In the inside was a drop of deadly poison, and a very small hole, out of which it would not make its way except it was squeezed. When the poor man was wearing it the murderer would come and shake his hand violently, the lion's claw would give his finger a scratch, and, in a few hours he was a dead man. One of these rings retained its destructive power sufficiently to imperil human life for nearly four hundred years. A person who put it on was saved only by great skill on the part of his physician, and by the strongest medicines. How like this poison is to sin! You commit a sin now, and for the present forget it; and perhaps ten or twelve years hence the wound you then, so to speak, gave yourself, may break out again, and that more dangerously than ever. And the greatest danger of all is lest the thoughts of sins committed, and the pleasure we had in committing them, should come back upon us in the hour of death, or appear against us in the day of judgment.

18—22. (18) **go up**, fr. this it would seem that Dav. saw the vision fr. his palace. **altar**, *etc.*, this marked the site for the future temple. (19) **went up**, the hill *Moriah*. (20) **Ornan**, the narrative reverts to what actually occurred at the threshing-floor. This is not narrated in Samuel. **hid themselves**, the vision being an overwhelming one. (21) **bowed himself**, in Oriental attitude acknowledging a superior.[a] (22) **grant**, or give.[b] **full price**, Dav. would not devote to God that which cost him little or nothing.

Honesty in high life.—Some years ago it was proposed to the Duke of Wellington to purchase a farm in the neighbourhood of Strathfieldsaye, which lay contiguous to his estate, and was

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a "It can hardly be doubted that one of these pestilences must have been that fatal sickness wh. has even to our own time especially ravaged Egypt and the East, and wh. formerly visited Western Europe; *the* plague described as virulent typhus, in the highest degree contagious, and accompanied with extreme debility."—*Ayre.*

b Ge. vi. 6; Ex. xxxii. 14; 2 Sa. xxiv. 16; Jer. xxvi. 19.

c No mention is made of their presence in 2 Sa. xxiv. 16, 17.

d *R. Berry.*

e *T. Fuller.*

"To one capable of appreciating moral beauty, sin is discord, disorder, deformity; horrible is a boy growing into a villain, or a full-grown villain maturing into a devil; beautiful, a youth rising up to virtuous manhood, or a man ripening into an angel of God. As a mansion forsaken of man and occupied with serpents and wild beasts, so, to a pure eye, is a sinful soul."—*Dr. Thomson.*

David told to set up an altar

a He was possibly the last of the Jebusite kings.

b 2 Sa. xxiv. 21.

"He who freely praises what he means to purchase, and he who enumerates

therefore a valuable acquisition, to which he assented. When the purchase was completed, his steward congratulated him upon having had such a bargain, as the seller was in difficulties and forced to part with it. "What do you mean by a bargain?" said the duke. The other replied, "It was valued at £1,100, and we have got it for £800." "In that case," said the duke, "you will please to carry the extra £300 to the late owner, and never talk to me of cheap land again."[c]

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the faults of what he means to sell, may set up a partnership with honesty."—*Lavater.*

c *Raikes.*

23—27. (23) **take it to thee,** comp. Ge. xxiii. 11—15. In this case it would seem that royalty met royalty, and neither wished to be beholden to the other. (24) **wh. is thine,** Dav. himself wished to make the sacrifice, so felt he could only give that wh. was his own. (25) **for the place,** the whole hill top.[a] The amount given in 2 Sa. xxiv. 24 is different. (26) **by fire,** as Ju. vi. 21, or 1 Ki. xviii. 38.[b] (27) **into the sheath,** as a soldier does when battle is stayed.

A cheap religion no religion at all (*v.* 24).—True religion is—I. Spirituality in contradistinction to formalism. II. Enthusiasm in contradistinction to prudence. III. Nobility in contradistinction to meanness. IV. Progress in contradistinction to stationariness. V. Reality in contradistinction to falseness.—*Homilist.*

Uprightness.—The late Charles Grant, Esq., a leading member of the court of East India directors, was for a long time the commercial resident in Malta; where, in addition to a liberal salary, he received a considerable commission on all the articles purchased by him for the company. On making up his accounts at the end of two or three successive years, he found the sum due to him was very great, and that he was making a large fortune very rapidly. Possessing the most scrupulous integrity, he sent all his books down to the governor-general in Calcutta, and begged that they might be very carefully examined, as he was making money so fast, that he suspected he was not getting it honestly, though he could discover no error in his accounts. The governor-general, says the Bengalee newspaper, from whence these facts are derived, returned the books to him unexamined, and begged him to be quite at ease on the subject, adding, that he wished all the servants of the honourable company were equally scrupulous.—*Temporal evils of sin.*—It is the Trojan horse; it hath sword and famine and pestilence in the belly of it. Sin is a coal, that not only blacks, but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries relations. Sin shoots the flying roll of God's curses into a family and kingdom (Zech. v. 4). It is reported of Phocas, having built a wall of mighty strength about his city, there was a voice heard, "Sin is in the city, and that will throw down the wall."[c]

David buys the threshing-floor of Ornan

a "Not only the threshing-floor, for the site of the altar, but the whole homestead and its precincts, for the site of the future temple."—*Wordsworth.*

b See also Ge. iv. 4; Le. ix. 24; 2 Ki. i. 12; 2 Chr. vii. 1.

"We should take care of the beginning of sin. Nobody is exceeding wicked all at once: the devil is too cunning to startle men with temptations to great and frightful crimes at first, but if he can tempt them to leave off their prayers, to take God's name in vain, to drink, to swear, to hear filthy discourse, and to speak of the vices of others with pleasure, he will soon tempt them to crimes of a damning nature."—*Bp. Wilson.*

c *T. Watson.*

28—30. (28) **sacrificed there,** regarding that spot as specially sacred from henceforth. (29) **Gibeon,**[a] 8 miles N.W. of Jerus. (30) **afraid,** poss. bec. fr. the position in wh. the angel stood, he must, as it were, go past him to reach Gibeon.[b]

Man the organ both of the evil and the good (*v.* 27, *ff.*).—In this chap. we have man in two aspects. I. Bringing tremendous evils on the earth. 1. Satanic influence interferes not with personal responsibility; 2. One man's sin entails misery on thousands; 3. God has agents at hand to execute His judgments.

David sacrifices on the altar

a 1 Ki. iii 4; 1 Chr. xvi. 39; 2 Chr. i. 3

b "Or, 'David, knowing that by

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sacrifice on this altar he had caused the angel to stay his hand, was afraid to transfer his offerings elsewhere, lest the angel should resume his task, and pestilence again break out." —*Spk. Com.*

None of this statement is found in 2 Sa. xxiv. 25.

c Homilist.

d J. Smith.

"Surely the mischief of hypocrisy can never be enough inveighed against. When religion is in request, it is the chief malady of the church, and numbers die of it; though because it is a subtle and inward evil, it be little perceived. It is to be feared there are many sick of it, that look well and comely in God's outward worship, and they may pass well in good weather, in times of peace; but days of adversity are days of trial." —*Bp. Hall.*

e H. Smith.

II. Through God, arresting these evils. By the spirit of prayerfulness. 1. Profound contrition for sin; 2. Trust in God; 3. Atoning self-sacrificing benevolence. Learn:—(1) The solemnity of human life; (2) The ruinous and restorative dispositions in man.[c]

No artifice in religion.—True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it, when in our juggliugs in religion we cast a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature, informing the souls of men; it is a God-like frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial, universal love of God and all true goodness, without partiality and without hypocrisy; whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing Him to love Him, and conform ourselves as much as may be to all that perfection which shines forth in Him.[d]—*The exposure of hypocrisy.*—The very show of goodness shall be taken from them which have not goodness itself; lest men should content themselves with shows and shadows. Christ saith, That which he seemeth to have shall be taken from him; as if He should say, Take away his talent and his napkin too, that he may not seem to have a talent; as Moses saith, I will not leave a hoof behind. Thou shalt not seem just, nor wise, nor honest, but I will make thee as naked to men as Adam was to Me. Even as the fig tree, because it had no fruit, was spoiled of his leaves, which showed like fruit; so they which have made shipwreck of honesty shall make shipwreck of credit too. Their name shall go with a brand upon it, like Cain the murderer, Achan the thief, Absalom the rebel, Magus the sorcerer. Jeroboam had for his title, Jeroboam who made Israel to sin. Demas had for his title, Demas which embraced the world. Mark how sin doth persecute and vex the sinner. Indeed Demas had embraced the world, but he would not have the world to know it; but see first how God makes Paul to know it, and after He makes him to proclaim it, that now Demas is not only a hypocrite, but known to be a hypocrite, like a rogue which is burned in the ear. When Jeroboam's wife came to the prophet to inquire of her son, she disguised herself because she would not be known; yet the prophet knew her, for so soon as she knocked at the door, he called, Come in, Jeroboam's wife; so, though men disguise themselves with sober countenances, and holy speeches, and honest company, because they would not be known; yet, when God seeth a hypocrite, He will pull his visor from his face, as Adam was stripped of his fig leaves, and show the anatomy of his heart as though his life were written in his forehead, and he shall marvel how men know that which he scarce thought had been known to God.[e]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

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David prepares for the future temple

a De. xii. 5; 2 Chr. iii. 1.

b 2 Chr. ii. 17, 18; 1 Ki. ix. 20, 21.

1—5. (1) **said,** as if led by prophetic inspiration to fix on this site. **the house,** or situation for the house.[a] (2) **strangers,** aliens, not born Israelites:[b] partly descendants of the old Canaanites, partly war-captives.[c] **set masons,** these were prob. skilled workmen.[d] (3) **joinings,** iron bands or cramps, for fastening securely wood or stone. **brass,** *etc.*, ch. xviii. 8. (4)

Sidonians, *etc., see* 1 Ki. v. 1, 15—25 ; 1 Chr. xiv. 1 ; 2 Chr. ii. 16. (5) **tender,**[e] ch. xxix. 1 ; 1 Ki. iii. 7. **magnifical,** grand, splendid ; an obsolete word : we now say *magnificent.*

Provision for the future (*v.* 5).—From these words we gather—I. That fathers should do their utmost to make their sons' work in the service of God easy. The materials they may supply are—1. The incentive of a good example ; 2. A Christian education ; 3. A knowledge of the world's need. II. That the Church of the present should make provision for the work of the Church in the future. III. That in making this provision we should be influenced by two things. 1. A consideration of the present weakness of the Church—money and men ; 2. Of the greatness of the work to be done. Learn:—If we cannot build the temple we may at least gather materials. The explorations of travellers, compiling of dictionaries, translation of Scriptures, etc., are materials collected now for the aid of future builders.

Caring for the future.—Men fall into the great mistake, on this subject, of supposing that to look forward must mean to look anxiously forward. It is just as easy to look forward with hope as with sadness. And God's Word does not teach us that we are not to plan and forelook, but that we are not to plan and forelook with a spirit of anxious, mischievous, annoying fear. That is forbidden. Asceticism of every kind is against the Word of God. That is asceticism which leads a man to torment himself on account of the future—which leads a man to use the future as a whip to flagellate himself with. That is forbidden. It is not using the future : it is abusing it rather.[f]

6—10. (6) **called for,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. ii. 1—3. (7) **in my mind,** 2 Sa. vii. 1—17. (8) **shed blood,**[a] 1 Ki. v. 3 ; 1 Chr. xxviii. 3, (9) **Solomon,** peaceful, or peaceable ; he is also called *Jedidiah. beloved of Jehovah.*[b] **give peace,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. iv. 20—23, v. 4. (10) **my son,** in an especial manner, under peculiar care and guidance.

The predicted Son (*v.* 9).—I. Son of David,—so was Christ. II. A man of rest,—so was Christ. III. The giver of peace,—so was Christ. IV. He had a significant name,—so has Jesus Christ. V. He was a glorious king,—so is Christ. IV. His great work was the building of the temple,—so is the work of Christ.

The tabernacle and the temple.—1. The tabernacle preparatory to the temple ; this but the introduction to our better house. 2. The tabernacle suited to a wandering life ; the temple suited to permanent and settled life : our body suited to this life ; our heavenly home to the future life. 3. The training of the tabernacle needful to the worship of the temple ; the training of earth needful to the higher worship of heaven. 4. The temple a place of sacrifice and prayer. No temple in heaven. Sacrifices not needed in that holy place ; nor prayer, where all will be praise.[c]

11—16. (11) **be with thee,** lit. *shall be with thee.* (12) **wisdom,**[a] *see* Sol.'s prayer, 1 Ki. iii. 5—15. **keep the law,** this the one condition of prosperity for all Israelites. (13) **strong,** *etc.*, De. xxxi. 6, 8 ; Jos. i. 6, 7. (14) **my trouble,** so characterising his reign, as full of anxieties and troubles. No reference to any one special trouble here. **hundred .. silver,** taking the usual idea of the talent this would amount to more than **eighty millions sterling.**[b] Either the talent was of smaller value,

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c Jamieson.

d 1 Ki. v. 17, 18.

e "Sol.'s exact age at this time is uncertain, but it cannot have been more than twenty-four or twenty-five; it may have been as little as fourteen or fifteen." —*Spk. Com.*
In an old sermon by *Alp. Sandys*, p. 278, we have,—"There is no respect of persons with God; neither ought we to be carried away with external shows of *magnifical* pomp, of glorious titles, of great authority, much learning, nor in matter of religion to respect the messenger, but the message."

f H. W. Beecher.

David charges Solomon to build the temple

a 2 Sa. viii. 2, 5, x. 18, xii. 31; 1 Ki. xi. 16.

b 2 Sa xii. 25.

v. 9. Dr. M. Hole, On the Liturgy, i. 263.

"If we would amend the world, we should mend ourselves, and teach our children to be not what we are but what they should be."—*W. Penn.*

c Topics.

David exhorts Solomon to obey God

a Ps. lxxii. 1.

b Wordsworth.

"Prosperity too often has the same effect on a

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Christian that a calm at sea has on a Dutch mariner, who frequently, it is said, in those circumstances, ties up the rudder, gets drunk, and goes to sleep." — *Bp. Horne.*

or the text here has been corrupted. (15) **cunning**, *i.e.* skilful.[c] (16) **be doing**, this charge was given just before Dav.'s death.

True prosperity (*v.* 13).—I. The nature of true prosperity. 1. Prospering as a man—soul growth. Divine favour, etc.; 2. Prospering circumstantially—in relation to position, office, etc. etc. II. The conditions of true prosperity. 1. The possession of the higher wisdom *v.* 12; 2. Obedience to the will of God. III. The contingencies of true prosperity. 1. The latter clause of the verse is suggestive of enemies and difficulties; 2. It also indicates the spirit of the man who would prosper.

Envying prosperity.—When a soldier was to die for taking a bunch of grapes against the general's command, he went to execution eating his grapes. One of his fellows rebuked him, saying, "What! are you eating your grapes now?" The poor man answers, "I prithee, friend! do not envy me these grapes! for they do cost me dear." So they did indeed; for they cost him his life. Thus let no man envy the prosperity of the wicked.[d]—*Ancient wealth and extravagance.*—Crœsus possessed in landed property a fortune equal to £1,700,000, besides a large amount of money, slaves, and other valuables, which amounted to an equal sum. He used to say that a citizen who had not a sufficient sum to support an army, or a legion, did not deserve the title of a rich man. The philosopher Seneca had a fortune of £3.500.000. Tiberius, at his death, left £23,624,000, which Caligula spent in less than twelve months. Vespasian, on ascending the throne, estimated all the expenses of the State at £35,000,000. The debts of Milo amounted to £6,000,000. Cæsar, before he entered upon any office, owed £2,995,000. He had purchased the friendship of Curion for £500, and that of Lucius Paulus, for £300,000. At the time of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, Antony was in debt to the amount of £3,000,000; he owed this sum on the ides of March, and it was paid by the kalends of April; he squandered £147,000,000. Appius squandered in debauchery £500,000, and finding, on examination of the state of his affairs, that he had only £80,000, poisoned himself, because he thought that sum insufficient for his maintenance. Julius Cæsar gave to Sutulla, the mother of Brutus, a pearl of the value of £10,000. Cleopatra, at an entertainment she gave to Antony, dissolved in vinegar a pearl worth £80,000, and he swallowed it. Clodius, the son of Esopus the comedian, swallowed one worth £8.000. One single dish cost Esopus £80,000. Caligula spent for one supper £80,000, and Heliogabulus £20,000. The usual cost for a repast for Lucullus was £20,000; the fish from his fish-ponds were sold for £35,000.[e]

c Ge. xxv. 27; Ex xxxviii. 23; 1 Sa. xvi. 16, 18; 1 Chr. xxv. 7; Ps. cxxxvii. 5.

d *Spencer.*

"They have spent their lives in heaping up colossal piles of treasure, which stand, at the end, like the Pyramids, in the desert sands, holding only the dust of kings."—*Beecher.*

"As riches and favour forsake a man, we discover him to be a fool; but nobody could find it out in his prosperity."—*Bruyere.*

e *Jeffers.*

David exhorts the princes to aid Solomon

17—19. (17) **princes**, members of the court, including Dav.'s other sons. (18) **mine hand**, as the agent God used, but the glory Dav. wholly gives to the Lord.[a] (19) **set your heart**, make this your purpose and your effort. (19) **the holy vessels**, those used in the Div. service of the tabernacle.

Seeking after God (*v.* 19).—I. The occasion on which this injunction was given. II. The injunction itself. 1. The great object of our life; 2. In what way we are to prosecute it. And now—(1.) Avail yourselves of the opportunities afforded for public usefulness; (2.) Begin with a surrender of your whole souls to God.[b]

Holy vessels.—In all heathen temples there are numerous

a Comp. Jos. xxii. 4.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"It is quite deplorable to see how many rational creatures, or, at least, who are thought so, mistake suffer-

vessels of brass, silver, and gold, which are especially holy. Those, however, of the highest castes may be allowed to touch, and even borrow them for certain purposes. Thus, a native gentleman, who is going to give a feast, borrows the large cauldron for the purpose of boiling the rice; should his daughter be about to be married, he has the loan of the silver salvers, plates, and even jewels; which, however, must all be purified by incense and other ceremonies when returned to the temple. "The ark" finds a striking illustration in the *keadagam* of the Hindoos,—a model of which may be seen in the house of the Royal Asiatic Society. In it are placed the idols, and other sacred symbols, which are carried on men's shoulders.[c]

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ing for sanctity, and think a sad face and a gloomy habit of mind propitious offerings to that Deity whose works are all light and lustre and harmony and loveliness." —*Lady Morgan.*

c Roberts.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

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David makes Solomon king of Israel

1—6. (1) **full of days,** comp. Ge. xxv. 8, xxxv. 29; the account of coronation of Sol. is given, 1 Ki. i. 33—39. (2) **gathered,**[a] comp. ch. xxviii. 1. (3) **and upward,** to age of fifty.[b] **man by man,** *i.e.* reckoning the men only. (4) **set forward,** or arrange, oversee. **officers,** *etc.*, as De. xvi. 18: kind of local magistrate.[c] (5) **porters,** *i.e.* watchmen, or door-keepers: really they acted as policemen or park-keepers now. (6) **courses,** to take regular turns.

a "All important measures relating to the public interest were submitted for consideration to a general assembly of the representatives of the tribes."—*Jamieson.*

Full of days (*v.* 1).—I. An instructive view of life: full of—not years—but days. Life built up of small portions of time. Men make small account of a day. II. A suggestive picture of old age. As a portrait is made up of minute touches, so old age is the result—in its character, memory, hopes—of each day's work, etc.

b Nu. iv. 3, 47.

A happy old age.—

Though old, he still retained
His manly sense and energy of mind;
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;
He still remembered that he once was young
His easy presence check'd no decent joy,
Him even the dissolute admired, for he
A graceful looseness, when he pleased, put on,
And, laughing, could instruct.[d]

c "This office of judge resembled that of the Mahometan *cadi*."—*Spk. Com.*

The beauty of old age.—The eye of age looks meek into my heart! the voice of age echoes mournfully through it! the hoary head and palsied hand of age plead irresistibly for its sympathies! I venerate old age; and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eye, and the shadows of twilight grow broader and deeper upon the understanding.[e]

1 Chr. xxvi. 20; 2 Chr. xix. 8.

d Armstrong.

e Longfellow.

7—11. (7) **Gershonites,** Ex. vi. 16. **Laadan,** called *Libni*, ch. vi. 17.[a] (8, 9) **sons of Shimei,** there seem to have been *two Shimeis*, the first a descendant of Laadan. (9) **chief of the fathers,** heads of houses. (10) **Zina,** marg. *Zizah.* (11) **not many sons,** so did not make separate houses.

sons of Levi

course of Gershon

a Ex. vi. 17; Nu. iii. 18.

The meaning of order.—What is this wonderful enchanter called order? What, exactly, do we mean by it? If we look into it more narrowly, we shall find that it implies the separation, division, and distribution of things according to their qualities,

"Order in a house ought to be like the machines in an

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opera, whose effect produces a great pleasure, but whose ends must be hid."—*Madame Necker.*

"Order is heaven's first law."—*Pope.*

"The order of the eternal manifests itself in the sun which rises and the heavens which fall."—*Jens Baggesen.*

"All are born to observe good order, but few are born to establish it."—*Joubert.*

[b] *Prof. Blackie.*

course of Kohath

[a] Ex. xxx. 7; Nu. xvi. 40; De. xxi. 5; 1 Sa. ii. 28.

For times in wh. Moses is called the "Man of God," see De. xxxiii. 1; Jos. xiv. 6; 2 Chr. xxx. 16; Ezr. iii. 2.

"He who has no taste for order will be often wrong in his judgment, and seldom considerate in his actions."—*Lavater.*

[b] *J. Howe.*

course of Merari

[a] Comp. Nu. iii. 20; 1 Chr. vi. 19; but see 1 Chr. xxiv. 26.

[b] Nu. xxxvi. 6.

"Order gave each thing view."—*Shakespeare.*

"Order, thou eye of action."—*Aaron Hill.*

[c] *Milton.*

in certain definite well-calculated times and spaces. Number and measure are the essence of it. The sands of the desert cannot be numbered; at least not by us; relatively to our faculties they are mere chaos; but the soldiers of a well-ordered army, arranged in rank and file, can be numbered, and their thousands told with as much ease as the units of a small sum, if only the arrangements be completed. So then order consists in dividing a confused multitude of individual elements into groups that bear a natural resemblance to one another in kind, in number, and in measure. A squad of full-grown soldiers, five in front, and three in depth, like the band of the old Greek chorus, is perfect order; each unit being like the other, and the whole being composed of parts that bear a definite relation of equality or proportion to the whole; the many under the controlling power of order have become one, and with that unity have acquired a distinct character, and are capable of answering a definite purpose. This, and this only, is the difference between an avalanche of shattered rocks on the storm-battered sides of Mont Blanc or Ben Mac-Dhui, and the stable piles of the Memphian pyramids, or the chaste columns of the Partheon; between what the great Scotch poet paints as—

> "Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
> The fragments of an earlier world,"

And the beautiful procession of things which Moses describes as marching forth into existence at the fiat of the Omnipotent.[b]

12—20. (12) **Kohath,** Ex. vi. 16. (13) **Amram,** Ex. vi. 20. **separated,** Ex. xxviii. 1; He. v. 4.[a] **bless in his name,** Nu. vi. 23. (14) **Moses,** Ex. ii. 22. (15) **sons of,** Ex. xviii. 3, 4. (15—17) **the chief,** first, and only one. (18—20) **Shelomith the chief,** firstborn, so head of tribe.

Order in the Divine government.—When we consider how exact care is taken in well-ordered secular governments, not only that things be done which the affairs of the government require, but that they be done regularly and in the way which is prescribed and set, so as that every one knows and attends the business of his own place and station, and that no one may expect that from the treasurer which is to be done by the chancellor, or that from him which belongs to the secretary of state; if there be any beauty and comeliness in order, where should we more expect to find it than in the Divine government, and in the conduct and management of the affairs of the supreme and celestial kingdom; wherein only the remoteness of those things from our sense makes everything seem little and inconsiderable?[b]

21—23. (21) **Merari,** Ex. vi. 16.[a] (22) **brethren,** or kinsmen, as was arranged by the law.[b] (23) **Mushi,** *v.* 21.

Universal order.—

> Order is heaven's first law—a glorious law,
> Seen in those pure and beauteous isles of light,
> That come and go, as circling months fulfil
> Their high behest. Nor less on earth discern'd
> 'Mid rocks snow clad, or wastes of herbless sand,
> Throughout all climes, beneath all varying skies,
> Fixing for e'en the smallest flower that blooms,
> Its place of growth.[c]

24—27. (24) **polls,** as *v.* 3. **twenty years,** comp. *v.* 3; this seems a relaxation of the original law: comp. Nu. viii. 24. (25) **that they may,** or rather, *and He, God, dwells in Jerus. for ever.*[a] (26) **carry,** bec. their wanderings were now over, and the ark was to find its rest. (27) **by the last words,** explaining the change noticed *v.* 24, and declaring it a final arrangement of David's.

The rest of the people of God (*v.* 25).—I. In the mysterious polity of the people of Israel, spiritual and temporal blessings were so closely allied, that the same language might naturally be employed to signify either. II. Hence David hinted at profounder truths than lie on the surface of his words. III. It becomes us to secure the great blessing—the rest that remaineth—as the chief object of existence. IV. Rest and peace must fall on a Christian spirit—1. From the imitation of Christ; 2. The singleness of its object; 3. The nature of the Christian affections; 4. To support and exalt us, heaven must mingle with earth.[b]

Service the road to honour.—When the Spartan king advanced against the enemy, he had always with him some one that had been crowned in the public games of Greece. And they tell us, that a Lacedæmonian, when large sums were offered him on condition that he would not enter the Olympic lists, refused them. Having with much difficulty thrown his antagonists in wrestling, one put this question to him, "Spartan, what will you get by this victory?" He answered with a smile, "I shall have the honour to fight foremost in the ranks of my prince." The honour which appertains to office in the Church of God lies mainly in this—that the man who is set apart for such service has the privilege of being first in holiness of example, abundance of liberality, patience of longsuffering, zeal in effort, and self-sacrifice in service. Thou gracious King of kings, if Thou hast made me a minister or deacon in Thy Church, enable me to be foremost in every good word and work, shunning no sacrifice, and shrinking from no suffering.[c]

28—32. (28) **wait on,** as ministers, attendants on the officiating priests. (29) **shewbread,** *etc.*, Le. vi. 21, *etc.* **measure,** or measuring work: proper quantities were fixed by law,[a] these the Levites had to arrange. (30) **every morning,** for the morning service. (31) **offer,** properly assist in offering. (32) **keep the charge,** *see* Nu. xviii. 3—5.[b]

Daily praise (*v.* 30).—I. Praise is a great privilege. One began a prayer with the words, "We thank Thee that we *may* praise Thee." II. Praise is a universal duty. Who is there who has not something for which to praise Him who makes the sun shine on the evil and on the good? III. Daily praise should be offered for daily mercies. 1. In the morning for the blessings of the night; 2. In the evening for the mercies of the day. IV. Hereafter there will be no morning or evening praise, but praise for ever. The praises of earth prepare for the praise of heaven.

The service of God reasonable.—Right reason acquiesces in and approves of the dedication and sacrifice of everything we have and are to the honour of our God. It is infinitely right and fit to engage ourselves unto the Lord; it is proportionate to His excellences, and to our state and wants. The way of obedience approves itself to the mind of man, and is sanctioned by the approbation of his inmost soul. We, then, treat God as He is;

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the office of the sons of Levi

a LXX., Arab Syr., *Bertheau.*

b A. Butler.

"One very common error misleads the opinion of mankind, that, universally, authority is pleasant, submission painful. In the general course of human affairs, the very reverse of this comes nearer to the truth. Command is anxiety, obedience, ease." —*Paley.*

"It is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy; and the two cannot be separated with impunity." —*Ruskin.*

c C. H. Spurgeon.

a Ex. xxix. 40, xxx. 23, 24; Le. vi. 20. xxiii. 13; Nu. xv. 4—10.

b Nu. iii. 5—9.

"Prayer has a right to the word 'ineffable.' It is an hour of outpourings which words cannot express, — of that interior speech which we do not articulate, even when we employ it."—*Swetchine.*

"The first petition that we are to make to Almighty God is for a good conscience, the next for health of

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mind, and then of body."—*Seneca.*

c *Bp. D. Wilson.*

we act agreeably to His nature and our relations to Him. Till we do this, we act most irrationally; we "walk in a lie." Sinners "who conform themselves to this world," and refuse to dedicate their bodies and souls to God, choose a most unreasonable part; so unreasonable, that at the last day they will be condemned out of their own mouths; and conscience will goad them, as "the worm that never dies," with its keen but just reproaches through eternity.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

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the twenty-four orders of the sons of Aaron

1—6. (1) **divisions,** *etc.*, Ex. xxviii. 1; Nu. xxvi. 60. (2) **Nadab,** *etc.*, Nu. iii. 4. (3) **distributed them,** into classes, and courses. **both Zadok,** better, *and Zadok, etc.*, assisted David in arranging the courses. **Ahimelech,** or *Abiathad.* (4) **chief men,** heads of houses. (5) **by lot,** for the avoidance of jealousies.[a] (6) **wrote them,** the names as drawn in the lot.

Importance of order.—What a monster in nature were that body which should have its organs and members so misplaced, that the hands occupied the place of the feet, and the heart palpitated in the cavity of the brain! And who, besides, does not know that the fruitfulness, the beauty, the very life, of a tree, depends not only on its having both roots and branches, but on these members being placed in their natural order? Let a tree be planted upside down,—set the root in the air, and the boughs in the earth,—and I need not ask how much fruit it would yield, nor how many seasons the unhappy plant would survive such barbarous and blundering treatment.

a Lit., "'He divided them by lot, these with these,' *i.e.*, those of the same family were together in the same class." — *Wordsworth.*

"No labour is hard, no time is long, wherein the glory of eternity is the mark we level at." — *Quarles.*

b *Dr. Guthrie.*

the casting of the lots

7—19. (10) **Abijah,** or *Abia*, Lu. i. 5.

Contrast of order.—In human doings and human productions we see everywhere manifestations of order. Well-ordered stones make architecture; well-ordered social regulations make a constitution and a police; well-ordered ideas make good logic; well-ordered words make good writing; well-ordered imaginations and emotions make good poetry; well-ordered facts make science. Disorder, on the other hand, makes nothing at all, but unmakes everything. Stones in disorder produce ruins; an ill-ordered social condition is decline, revolution, or anarchy; ill-ordered ideas are absurdity; ill-ordered words are neither sense nor grammar; ill-ordered imaginations and emotions are madness; ill-ordered facts are chaos.[a]

"To live is not to learn, but to apply." — *E. Legouve.*

"Methods are the masters of masters." — *Talleyrand.*

a *Prof. Blackie.*

20—26. (20) **the rest,** ch. xxiii. 7—23. The omission of the Gershonites is curious, and so is the addition to the Merarites (*vv.* 26, 27).[a] **Shubael,** comp. ch. xxiii. 16, xxvi. 21. (21) **Rehabiah,** ch. xxiii. 17. (22) **Shelomoth,** or *Shelomith*, as ch. xxiii. 18.[b] (23) **of Hebron . . first,** not in Heb. text, supplied fr. ch. xxiii. 19. (24) **Michah,** comp. ch. xxiii. 20. (25) **Isshiah,** or *Jeshiah*, ch. xxiii. 20. (26) **Beno,** should be translated *his son:* it is not a proper name.

the rest of the sons of Levi

a *Spk. Com.*

b Not the same as in 1 Chr. xxvi. 25, 26.

"Method is essential, and enables a larger amount of work to be got through with satisfac-

Variety in order.—

Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again;

Not chaos-like together crushed and bruised,
But, as the world, harmoniously confused,
Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves and checkered scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
There, interspersed in lawns and opening glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each others' shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend;
There, wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend;
Even the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That, crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.[c]

27—31. (27) **Beno, and,** omit the *and*, trans. Beno, and read *his son Shoham*, etc. Jaaziah is called Merari's son. (28) **Eleazar,** ch. xxiii. 21, 22. (29) **Kish,** also a son of *Mahli*. (30) **Mushi,** ch. xxiii. 23. (31) **principal . . brethren,** *i.e.* the lots were drawn on equal terms: it is also intimated that the courses of Levites and priests were fitted to each other.[a]

The service of God.—Whoever entered into the service of God with all his heart, as the Scripture directs, never found his reason rise in rebellion against him, any more than when as a servant he serves his master, or, as a subject, he serves his king; or, as a child, he obeys his parents. The service of God is in such harmony with reason, that it is only when engaged in it that man discovers his reason to occupy its proper place, and to exercise itself in its own legitimate functions. God is a being of infinite perfect reason; and can we imagine Him to require a service from His creatures contrary either to Himself or to them?[b]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1—7. (1) **captains,** same as mentioned ch. xxiii. 2, xxiv. 6. **of the,** omit these words. **Jeduthun,** or *Ethan*,[a] ch. vi. 42. **prophesy,** recited the sacred services: it seems to refer to the praising and teaching element of worship. **harp,** Ge. iv. 21. **psaltery,** 1 Sa. x. 5. **cymbals,** 2 Sa. vi. 5. (2) **under the hands,** or leadership. (3) **six,** as there are only five names here, add *Shimei*. fr. *v.* 17. (4) **Uzziel,** *see v.* 18. **Shebuel,** *see v.* 20. (5) **lift up the horn,**[b] fig. for increase of dignity and honour in such a family. (6) **cymbals,** *etc.*, *v.* 1. (7) **cunning,**[c] skilful. **two . . eight.**[d]

The word "cunning" (*v.* 7).—The fact that so many words implying knowledge, art, skill, obtain in course of time a secondary meaning of crooked knowledge, art which has degenerated into artifice, skill used only to circumvent,—which meaning partially or altogether puts out of use their primary,—is a mournful witness to the way in which intellectual gifts are too commonly misapplied. Thus there was a time when the Latin *dolus* required the epithet *malus*, as often as it signified a treacherous or fraud-

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tion. 'Method,' said Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, 'is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one.' Cecil's despatch of business was extraordinary; his maxim being, 'The shortest way to do many things is to do only one thing at once.'"—*Smiles.*

c Pope.

a "It was known and settled beforehand what course of Levites should be in waiting, with the courses of the priests respectively."—*Wordsworth.*
"He praiseth God best that serveth and obeyeth Him most; the life of thankfulness consists in the thankfulness of the life."—*Burkitt.*
b J. Bate.

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the order of the singers and musicians

a See titles of Ps xxxix., lxii., lxxvii., lxxxix.
b "*Blowing it loudly.*"—*Wordsworth.*
"Phrase means praising God."—*Gesenius.*
c 1 Chr. xxii. 15.
d "Each lot consisted of 12 persons, and there were 24 courses, and each course was in waiting for a week; and they prob. were adjusted to the

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24 courses of the priests. The sons of Asaph were 1; of Jeduthun, 6; of Heman, 14; making 24 in all." — *Wordsworth.*

[e] *Trench.*

the twenty-four orders of the singers

"It must always be remembered that the actions of public men will be the subject of thought at a future period; when interest is stifled, and passion is silent; when fear has ceased to agitate, and discord is at rest; but when conscience has resumed its sway over the human heart. Nothing but what is just, therefore, can finally be expedient, because nothing else can secure the permanent concurrence of mankind." — *Sir A. Alison.*

[a] *Prof. Blackie.*

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the courses of the porters

[a] "This word does not bear its modern significance of a *carrier of burdens*, but denotes in every case a *gate keeper*, from the Latin *portarius*, the man who attended to the *porta*. In the original the word is *shôêr*, from *sha'ar*, a gate. See 1 Chr. ix. 21; 2 Chr. xxiii. 19, xxxv. 15; Jno. x. 3." — *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

[b] "The nature of the blessing consisted in the great

ful device; but it was soon able to drop this as superfluous, and to stand by itself. Among other words which have gone the same downward course is our English word "cunning." As early as Lord Bacon, who says, "we take cunning for a sinister or crooked wisdom," it had acquired its present significance, but not then, nor till long after, to the exclusion of its more honourable use. In Foxe's *Martyrs* we read, "I believe that all these three persons, *i.e.* the Godhead, are equal in power and in cunning."

8—31. (8) **as well the small,** comp. ch. xxiv. 31, and note. This arrangement avoided signs of partiality. (9—31) These verses indicate the order in wh. the courses were settled, Asaph took the first, Jeduthun the second, Heman the third, and so on alternately; this left all the later courses to the family of Heman.

Order in creation.—Creation is the production of order. What a simple, but, at the same time, comprehensive and pregnant principle is here! Plato could tell his disciples no ultimate truth of more pervading significance. Order is the law of all intelligible existence. Everything that exists in the world, everything that has either been made by God, or has been produced by man, of any permanent value, is only some manifestation of order in its thousand-fold possibilities. Everything that has a shape is a manifestation of order. Shape is only a consistent arrangement of parts: shapelessness is only found in the whirling columns that sweep across African Saharas; but even these columns have their curious balance, which calculators of forces might foretell, and the individual grains of sand of which they are composed reveal mathematical miracles to the microscope. Every blade of grass in the field is measured; the green cups and the coloured crowns of every flower are curiously counted; the stars of the firmament wheel in cunningly calculated orbits; even the storms have their laws.[a]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—12. (1) **porters,** keepers, or watchmen.[a] **Korhites,** ch. ix. 19, 31. **Asaph,** the *Ebiasaph*, of ch. vi. 37, ix. 19. (2, 3) **Meshelemiah,** *v.* 14; comp. the *Shallum* of ch. ix. 19. (4) **Obed-edom,** 2 Sa. vi. 11, 12; 1 Chr. xiii. 14. (5) **blessed him,** *i.e.* Obed-edom.[b] (6) **mighty men,** so able to swing the great gates, and form a guard of defence in case of popular tumult. (7) **strong men,** comp. *v.* 6. (8) **able men,**[c] indicating that physical strength was required. (9, 10) **Hosah,** ch. xvi. 38. (11, 12) **chief men,** as overseers of the watch. **wards,** or stations, comp. ch. xxv. 8. **one against another,** or turns to keep the watch.

Light from history.—The situation of the Christian kings of Jerusalem, in particular, in the twelfth century, bears, in many respects, a strong resemblance to that of the kings of Judah; and the history of the crusades may serve to throw some light on the transactions of the Jewish princes. At least the comparing them together may be amusing. It is said of King Uzziah (1 Chr. xxvi. 6) that "he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about

Ashdod and among the Philistines." Thus we find, in the time of the crusades, when that ancient city of the Philistines, called Ashkelon, had frequently made inroads into the territories of the kingdom of Jerusalem, the Christians built two strong castles not far from Ashkelon; and finding the usefulness of these structures, King Fulk, in the spring of the year of our Lord 1138, attended by the patriarch of Jerusalem and his other prelates, proceeded to build another castle, called Blanche Guarda, which he garrisoned with such soldiers as he could depend upon, furnishing them with arms and provisions. These watching the people of Ashkelon, often defeated their attempts, and sometimes they did not content themselves with being on the defensive, but attacked them, and did them great mischief, gaining the advantage of them. This occasioned those who claimed a right to the adjoining country, encouraged by the neighbourhood of such a strong place, to build many villages, in which many families dwelt, concerned in tilling the ground, and raising provisions for other parts of their territories. Upon this the people of Ashkelon, finding themselves encompassed round by a number of inexpugnable fortresses, began to grow very uneasy at their situation, and to apply to Egypt for help by repeated messages! Exactly in the same manner we may believe Uzziah built cities about Ashdod, that were fortified to repress the excursions of its inhabitants, and to secure to his people the fertile pastures which lay thereabout; and which pastures, I presume, the Philistines claimed, and indeed all the low land from the foot of the mountains to the sea, but to which Israel claimed a right, and of a part of which this powerful Jewish prince actually took possession, and made settlements for his people there, which he thus guarded from the Ashdodites: "He built cities about Ashdod, even among the Philistines," for so I would render the words, as the historian appears to be speaking of the same cities in both clauses. Uzziah did more than King Fulk could do, for he beat down the walls not only of Gath and Jabneh, two neighbouring cities, but of Ashdod itself, which must have cut off all thoughts of their disturbing the Jewish settlers, protected by strong fortresses, when they themselves lay open to those garrisons. Ashkelon, on the contrary, remained strongly fortified by fortresses built by the Christians.[d]

13—19. (13) **cast lots,** especially for the gates, of wh. there were *four*, ch. xxv. 8. (14) **eastward,** *i.e.* for the east gate. (15) **Asuppim,** this word should be translated, *the house of the gatherings:*[a] some kind of treasure-house; prob. "towards S. end of W. wall of the temple court." (16) **Shuppim,** omit. **Shallecheth,** lit. *gate of the throwing out.*[b] **causeway,** or ascent, 1 Ki. x. 5. (17) **six Levites,** bec. the E. gate was most frequented. (18) **Parbar,**[c] some place on the W. side of the temple enclosure. (19) **these,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xxiii. 5; the large number were prob. under the leadership of these chief men.

Casting lots (*v.* 13).—Thus the gates were assigned to the different officers by lot. On the death of a parent, the whole of his fields and gardens are often divided among his children, and great disputes generally arise as to whom shall be given this or that part of the property. One says, "I will have the field to the east." "No," says another, "I will have that;" and it is

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increase of progeny by wh. his house was distinguished; 72 descendants are reckoned." — *Jamieson.*

c "The original is in the singular number, showing that each of them was thus qualified." — *Wordsworth.*

"Even the lowest book of chronicles partakes of the spirit of the age in which it was written. The fourteenth century records a comet with greater parade and awe than the nineteenth; and an account of an important event changes its aspect within four-and-twenty hours."—*Goethe.*

"History is the great looking-glass through which we may behold with ancestral eyes, not only the various deeds of past ages, and the odd accidents that attend time, but also discern the different humours of men."—*Howell.*

d Harmer.

lots cast for the gate-keepers

a "The store-chambers of the gates."—*Gesenius.*

b "Prob. the rubbish gate, thro' wh. all the accumulated filth and sweepings of the temple and its courts were poured out." — *Jamieson.*

c "Comp. *parvarim*, A.V. *suburbs*, of 2 Ki. xxiii. 11. Poss. Parbar is ancient Jebusite name."

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not till they have quarrelled and exhausted their store of ingenuity and abuse, that they will consent to settle the matter by lot. The plan they take is as follows:—They draw on the ground the cardinal points, they then write the names of the parties on separate leaves, and mix them all together; a little child is then called, and told to take one leaf and place it on any point of the compass he pleases. This being done, the leaf is opened, and to the person whose name is found therein will be given the field or garden which is in that direction. I think it therefore probable that the lots eastward, westward, northward, and southward, which fell to Shelemiah, Zechariah, Obed-edom, and Shuppim, were drawn something in the same way.[d]

— *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

"Chance is but the pseudonym of God for those particular cases which He does not choose to subscribe openly with His own sign-manual."—*Coleridge.*

d Roberts.

the keepers of the treasures

20—28. (20) **Ahijah,** as this person is not otherwise named, the Sept. treats it as *aheyhem*, and trans. *their brethren.*[a] **treasures,** gifts and payments.[b] (21) **Laadan,** ch. vi. 17. (22) **Jehieli,** ch. xxiii. 8. (23—25) **ruler,** or chief custodian. (26) **dedicated things,** partly as needful for the service, partly as increasing the idea of the wealth and greatness of the temple. (27) **spoils,** a proportion was always devoted to the temple. (28) **under the hand,** or in the care of.

Spoils of war (*v.* 27).—According to the law of Moses, the booty was to be divided equally between those who were in the battle, and those who were in the camp, whatever disparity there might be in the number of each party. The law further requires that out of that part of the spoils which was assigned to the fighting men the Lord's share should be separated; and for every five hundred men, oxen, sheep, etc., they were to take one for the high priest, as being the Lord's firstfruits, and out of the other moiety belonging to the children of Israel, they were to give for every fifty men, oxen, sheep, etc., one to the Levites. Among the Greeks and Romans the plunder was brought together into one common stock, and divided afterwards among the officers and soldiers, paying some respect to their rank in the distribution. Sometimes the soldiers made a reserve of the chief part of the booty, to present, by way of compliment, to their respective generals. The gods were always remembered. And the priest had sufficient influence to procure them a handsome offering, and other acceptable presents.[c]

a This reading is approved by *Michaelis* and *Bertheau, Spk. Com.*, etc.

b Ex. xxx. 12; Nu. xviii. 16; Le. xxvii.

"Five things are requisite to a good officer,—ability, clean hands, despatch, patience, and impartiality."—*W. Penn.*

"High office is like a pyramid; only two kinds of animals reach the summit,—reptiles and eagles."—*D'Alembert.*

c Burder.

the officers and judges

29—32. (29) **outward business,** concerning the people's private or public affairs, not those of the temple. **officers,** *etc.*, as ch. xxiii. 4. (30) **business of the Lord,** as Scribes, or teachers of the law. **service of the king,** as executing his office of judge. (31) **Jerijah,** ch. xxiii. 19, xxiv. 23. **Jazer,**[a] also *Jaazer*, about 10 m. W. of Ammân, and 15 fr. Heshbon. (32) **rulers,** *etc.*

Jewish scribes (*v.* 29).—The *schoterim*, or scribes, were different from the judges, for Moses had expressly ordained (De. xvi. 18) that in every city there should be appointed, not only judges, but schoterim likewise. It is very certain that Moses had not originally instituted these officers, but already found them among the people while in Egypt. For when the Israelites did not deliver the required tale of bricks, the schoterim were called to account and punished (Ex. v. 6—14). Now, as "satar," in Arabic, signifies to write, and its derivative, "mastir," a person whose duty it is to keep accounts and collect debts, I am almost

a Jos. xiii. 25, xxi. 39.

"One man, perhaps, proves miserable in the study of the law, who might have flourished in that of physic or divinity; another runs his head against the pulpit, who might have been serviceable to his country at the

persuaded that these schoterim must have been the officers who kept the genealogical tables of the Israelites, with a faithful record of births, marriages, and deaths; and, as they kept the rolls of families, had, moreover, the duty of apportioning the public burdens and services on the people individually. An office exactly similar we have not in our governments, because they are not so genealogically regulated; at least, we do not institute enumerations of the people by families. But among a people whose notions were completely clannish, and among whom all hereditary succession, and even all posthumous fame, depended on genealogical registers, this must have been an office fully as important as that of a judge. In Egypt, the Levites had not yet been consecrated and set apart from the rest of the tribes; there, of course, the schoterim must have been chosen out of every family, or, perhaps, merely according to the opinion entertained of their fitness for the office. In the time of the Kings, however, we find them generally taken from the tribe of Levi (1 Ch. xxiii. 3; 2 Ch. xix. 8—11, xxxiv. 13). This was a very rational procedure, as the Levites devoted themselves particularly to study; and among the husbandmen and people few were likely to be so expert at writing as to be entrusted with the keeping of registers so important. Add to this that, in later times, the genealogical tables were kept in the temple. We find these schoterim mentioned in many other passages besides those quoted above. In Nu. xi. 16, they are the persons of respectability from among whom the supreme senate of seventy is chosen. In De. i. 15, mention is made of schoterim appointed by Moses in the wilderness, although the people had previously had such magistrates in Egypt; most probably he only filled the places of those who were dead. In De. xx. 5, we see them charged with orders to those of the people that were selected to go to war, which is perfectly suited to my explanation of the nature of their office. In De. xxix. 10, xxxi. 28, Jos. viii. 33, we find them as representatives of the people in their assemblies, or when a covenant with God is entered into. In Jos. i. 10, they appear as the officers who communicated to the people the general's orders respecting military affairs; and this, again, corresponds to the province of muster-masters. In 2 Chr. xxvi. 11, we have the chief schoter, under whose command the whole army stands after the general, if, indeed, he himself be not so. In 1 Ch. xxvii. 1, the name of the office alone is mentioned.[b]

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plough; and a third proves a very dull and heavy philosopher, who possibly would have made a good mechanic, and have done well enough at the useful philosophy of the spade or auvil."—*South.*

"The Emperor Caligula provided a mighty navy; and every one expected that the whole country of Greece would be invaded. So it might have been; but the emperor employed his soldiers to gather a quantity of cockle-shells and pebble-stones instead. Just such a voyage does almost every man make in this world, were the particulars truly cast up."—*Spencer.*

"Occupation was one of the pleasures of Paradise and we cannot be happy without it."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

b Michaelis.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

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1—9. (1) **courses,** arrangement for the army similar to that already described for priests and Levites. Military force consisted of twelve companies of 24,000 each: a company serving a month at a time.[a] (2) **Jashobeam,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 8. (3) **Perez,** or *Pharez*, son of Judah. (4) **Dodai,** read Eleazar, son of Dodai (ch. xi. 12). (5) **Benaiah,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 20—23. **a chief priest,** Abiathar was high priest, but Jehoiada was head of the Aaronite family. (7) **Asahel,**[b] as he died early his name may have been continued in this regiment. (8) **Shamhuth,** comp. Shammah, 2 Sa. xxiii. 11, and Shammoth, 1 Chr. xi. 27. (9) **Ira,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 26.

the twelve monthly captains

a 2 Sa. xxiii. 8; 1 Ch. xi. 11.

b 2 Sa. xxiii. 24, ii. 18—23.

"Zeal for the public good is the characteristic of a man of honour and a gentleman, and must take the place of plea-

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sures, profits, and all other private gratifications. Whoever wants this motive is an open enemy or an inglorious neuter to mankind, in proportion to the misapplied advantages with which nature and fortune have blessed him."—*Steele.*

c *J. Foster.*

"Whether zeal or moderation be the point at wh. we aim, let us keep fire out of the one, and frost out of the other."—*Addison.*

d *C. H. Spurgeon.*

Zeal in the service of God.—The angel (who delivered Peter), like the other angels of God—like the angel that hurried Lot—appears in a kind of solemn haste. "Arise up quickly," he says; "gird thyself." These spirits, when their purpose is effected, do not stand in wonderment at their own exploits—they take no breathing time—they want no leisure to rest from the toil and contemplate the conquest. It is a very ordinary thing to them; it excites no particular surprise or elation in their minds; they do not think of repose. So should it be with the servants of God on earth. They should not stand still, wondering at their own doings, or think they deserve a year's holiday after the labour of one exploit; they also should be in solemn haste—their time is all too short. Not an hour should pass, after their greatest effort, without preparing for some new service.[c]

10—15. (10) **Helez,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 26. (11) **Sibbecai,** 2 Sa. xxi. 18. (12) **Abiezer,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 27. (13) **Maharai,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 28. (14) **Benaiah,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 30. (15) **Heldai,** or *Heleb*, 2 Sa. xxiii. 29.

The sure reward of serving God.—When Calvin was banished from ungrateful Geneva, he said: "Most assuredly, if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise."[a]

the princes of the twelve tribes

a 1 Sa. xvii. 13, 28; 1 Chr. ii. 13. b Ge. xxii. 17. xxvi. 4.

"The zeal which begins with hypocrisy must conclude in treachery; at first it deceives, at last it betrays."—*Bacon.*

c *Venning.*

16—24. (16—18) **Elihu,** or Eliab, 1 Sa. xvi. 6.[a] (19—22) **Abner,** Saul's general. (23) **took not,** *etc.*, intimating that the census was not of the whole population, and that its chief object was an arrangement of the army in proper proportion to the adult population. **increase,** *etc.*, Ge. xv. 5.[b] (24) **fell wrath,** ch. xxi. 7.

Sinister service of God.—Some men are kind to others but for their own ends; and when they have once attained the end for which they were kind, there is an end of their kindness: they will serve you for their needs, and, when you have served their needs, you shall observe that they will neither serve nor observe you any longer. Alas, do not men serve God thus? Doth not *rich* Jacob forget to pay what *poor* Jacob did promise?[c]

David's several officers

a Is. lxv. 10.

"Any occupation which is innocent is better than none; as the writing of a book, the building of a house, the laying out of a garden, the digging of a fish-pond,—even the raising of a cucumber or a tulip."—*Paley.*

"If every man would but do that wh. nature fitted him for, the cows will be well tended."—*La Fontaine.*

25—29. (25) **king's treasures,** his private accumulations. This refers to the treasure in Jerusalem. **storehouses,** these were scattered about the country, bec. taxes would be paid *in kind*, not in money. (26) **of the field,** tilling the royal farms. (27) **vineyards,** one officer presided over the grape-growing, another over the wine-making. (28) **olive trees,** grown chiefly for the oil. **sycomore,** the fig-mulberry. (29) **herds,** cattle for supply of milk and flesh to the royal table. **Sharon,**[a] a very fertile district. **valleys,** or plain, the *Shefelah*, or low country of Judah.

Cellars of oil (*v.* 28).—When our translation represents Joash as over the cellars of oil, in the time of king David, 1 Chr. xxvii. 28, they have certainly, without any necessity, and perhaps improperly, substituted a particular term for a general expression. Joash was at that time, according to the sacred historian, over the treasures of oil; but whether it was kept in cellars, or in some other way, does not at all appear in the original history. The modern Greeks, according to Dr. Richard Chandler, do not keep their oil in cellars, but in large earthen jars, sunk in the

ground, in areas before their houses. The custom might obtain among the Jews: as then it was needless, it must be improper to use the particular term cellars, when the original uses a word of the most general signification. It is certain they sometimes buried their oil in the earth, in order to secrete it in times of danger, on which occasion they must be supposed to choose the most unlikely places, where such concealment would be least suspected, in their fields; whether they were wont to bury it, at other times, in their courtyards, cannot be so easily ascertained.[b]

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"Every base occupation makes one sharp in its practice, and dull in every other." —*Sir Philip Sidney.*

b Harmer.

30—34. (30) **camels . . asses,** used as beasts of burden. (31) **flocks,** including sheep and goats. (32) **also Jonathan,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. viii. 15—18. **scribe,** or secretary. **with the king's sons,** as companion and adviser. (33) **Ahithophel,** 2 Sa. xv., xvi., xvii. **king's companion,** comp. 1 Ki. iv. 5. (34) **after Ahith.,** next valued as a counsellor. **Jehoiada,** *etc.*, prob. should be read, *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.*[a]

David's counsellors

a "The grandson may, however, have had the same name as the grandfather."—*Wordsworth.*

The ass (*v.* 30).—Natural historians mention two varieties of this animal, the domestic and the wild ass; but it is to the former our attention at present is to be directed. His colour is generally a reddish brown, a circumstance to which he owes his name in the Hebrew text; for *hamor* is derived from a verb which signifies to be red or dun. This appears to have been the predominating colour in the Oriental regions; but we learn, from the song of Deborah, that some asses were white, and on this account reserved for persons of high rank in the state. The term *athon* is another name for that creature, from a root which signifies to be firm or strong; because he is equal to a greater load than any animal of the same size. To this quality Jacob alluded in his last benediction: "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens." Or it may refer to the stubborn temper for which he is remarkable, and the stupid insensibility which enables him to disregard the severest castigation till he has accomplished his purpose. These qualties are beautifully described by Homer, in the 11th book of the *Iliad;* but the passage is too long to be quoted. In the patriarchal ages, the breed of this animal, which we regard with so much unmerited contempt, was greatly encouraged, and constituted no inconsderable portion of wealth among Oriental shepherds. It is on this account the number of asses in the herds of Abram, and other patriarchs, is so frequently stated by Moses in the Book of Genesis. So highly were they valued in those times of primitive simplicity, that they were formed into separate droves, and committed to the management of princes and other persons of distinction. The sacred historian informs us that Anab, a Horite prince, did not think it unbecoming his dignity to feed the asses of Zibeon his father; and that the sons of Jacob seized the asses of Shechem and his people, and drove them away, with the sheep and the oxen. During the seven years of famine that wasted the land of Egypt, and reduced the people to the greatest distress, Joseph purchased their asses, and gave them corn to preserve them alive. When the people of Israel subdued the Midianites, they carried away "threescore and one thousand asses." In times long posterior, Saul, the son of Kish, was sent in quest of his father's asses, which had strayed from their pasture; and he was engaged in this service when the prophet Samuel received a command to anoint him king over Israel.

"Let a man choose what condition he will, and let him accumulate around him all the goods and all the gratifications seemingly calculated to make him happy in it; if that man is left at any time without occupation or amusement, and reflects on what he is, the meagre, languid felicity of his present lot will not bear him up. He will turn necessarily to gloomy anticipations of the future; and except, therefore, his occupation calls him out of himself, he is inevitably wretched." —*Pascal.*

Kings and princes were accustomed to ride upon the ass in times of peace. The horse was not common in Judæa, and was seldom employed except in warlike journeys. Even Solomon, in the height of his grandeur, when going to his co-

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auguration, rode upon a mule. Animals which had never been used were accounted especially pure and sacred. Hence it was very appropriate that our Lord should ride upon a colt "whereupon never man sat."

"Motives imply weakness, and the reasoning powers imply the existence of evil and temptation. The angelic nature would act from impulse alone." — *Coleridge.*

b Paxton.

After David's accession to the throne, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, he appointed Jehdeiah the Meronothite, a prince in Israel, to superintend this part of his property. Nor was this animal unworthy of such attention and care. His humility, patience, and temperance, qualities in which he greatly excels, eminently fitted him for the service of man. His great value was soon discovered, and he was preferred even to the horse, for many domestic purposes. The sons of Jacob employed him to carry burdens of every kind; and he seems to have been the only quadruped they took with them in their repeated journeys into Egypt, to purchase corn for their households; and their descendants continued for many ages to employ him in the same manner. The fruits of the field, the produce of the vineyard, provisions and merchandise of all kinds, were carried on the backs of asses. He was long used for the saddle in the Oriental regions; and persons of high rank appeared in public mounted on this animal. Those which the great and wealthy selected for their use, were larger and more elegant animals than the mean and unshapely creature with which we are acquainted. Dr. Russel, in his *History of Aleppo*, mentions a variety of the ass in Syria, much larger than the common breed; and other travellers say that some of them in Persia are kept like horses for the saddle, which have smooth hair, carry their heads well, and are quicker in their motions than the ordinary kind, which are dressed like horses, and are taught to amble like them.[b]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1015.

David assembles the princes of Israel

a 1 Chr. xxvii. 1—31.

b 1 Ki. i. 1.

c Comp. Ps. cxxxii. 3—5.

d 1 Chr. v. 2; Ps. lx. 7, lxxviii. 67, 68.

e H. W. Beecher.

1—4. (1) **assembled,** *etc.*, all the various officials of whom previous account has been given: really the whole court.[a] (2) **stood up,** indicating effort made in the feebleness of old age and disease.[b] **my brethren,** affectionate mode of address, and putting himself in this relig. matter on an equality with them. **footstool,** the ark, esp. its cover, was so regarded. **made ready,** gathering materials.[c] (3) **God said,** 2 Sa. vii. 5, 13; 1 Ki. v. 5; 1 Chr. xxii. 8. (4) **chosen Judah,** Ge. lxix. 8.[d]

The beauty of old age.—Old age is a part of the scheme of life, which was designed to be beautiful from beginning to end. It is the close of a symphony, beautiful in its inception, rolling on grandly, and terminating in a climax of sublimity. It is harmonious and admirable, according to the scheme of nature. The charms of infancy, the hopes of the spring of youth, the vigour of manhood, and the serenity and tranquillity, the wisdom and peace of old age; all these together constitute the true human life—with its beginning, middle, and end—a glorious epoch.[e]

and declares Solomon his successor

a 2 Sa. vii. 5—16; 1 Chr. xvii. 4—14.

"For my own part, I had rather be old only a short time than be old before I really am so."—*Cicero.*

5—8. (5) **chosen Solomon,** the Div. selection of Sol. is always assumed, tho' not specially recorded.[a] (6) **my son,** specially to serve me in this matter. (7) **constant,** comp. 1 Ki. iii. 14, ix. 4. (8) **now,** *etc.*, appeal first to the congregation, then to Sol. in their presence.

Happiness of old age.—As ripe fruit is sweeter than green fruit, so is age sweeter than youth, provided the youth were grafted into Christ. As harvest-time is a brighter time than seed-time, so is age brighter than youth; that is, if youth were a seed-time for good. As the completion of a work is more glorious than the

beginning, so is age more glorious than youth; that is, if the foundation of the work of God were laid in youth. As sailing into port is a happier thing than the voyage, so is age happier than youth; that is, when the voyage from youth is made with Christ at the helm.[b]

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"A youthful age is desirable, but aged youth is troublesome and grievous."—*Chilo.*
b J. Pulsford.

charges Solomon to build the temple

9, 10. (9) **know thou,** that experimental knowledge wh. is only to be gained by loving and serving.[a] "An unusual phrase in the earlier Scriptures."[b] **searcheth,** so the least failure will surely be observed.[c] (10) **be strong,** comp. *constant, v.* 7.[d]

Fathers and children (*vv.* 9, 10).—In this earnest and affectionate charge, we see one generation—I. Transmitting the knowledge of God to its successor. II. Enjoining the service of God upon its successor. III. Indicating God's method of dealing to his successor. IV. Bequeathing its unfulfilled intentions to its successor.—(*M. Braithwaite.*) —*The knowledge and service of God* (*v.* 9).—Impossible to obtain a complete, but easy to acquire a sufficient. knowledge of God. I. In what it consists. II. Some practical observations. III. The necessity of serving God. IV. The character of this service.[e]

Knowledge.—Clearness of knowledge takes off much from the difficulty of duty. The better a man sees his work, the more easily he may do it. The most skilful artist may blunder when he works by a dim light. That man is like to go on most readily in his way who not only knows the right one but the wrong ones too. A clear sight of spiritual things may help a Christian on his way, not only as a direction but as a delight. Knowledge also makes him more useful, more helpful to others. The more knowledge we have, the more we may communicate. Those that understand most themselves, may best instruct and direct others.[f]

a Ps. xxxvii. 10.

b Spk. Com.

c Ps. vii. 9, xvii. 3, cxxxix. 1—3.

d 1 Ki. ii. 3, 4.

v. 9. *J. Boyse*, i. 175; *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 211; *Dr. J. Conant*, v. 217; *Dr. J. Evans*, 23; *J. Wheatland*, 113; *S. Bourn*, 1; *Dr. J. Burton*, ii. 247; *Dr. L. Howard*, 43; *Dr. J. Guyse*, 169; *J. Mason*, iii. 102, *ff.*; *J. Riddock*, ii. 309; *Dr. J. Disney*, iii. 39; *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 1; *W. T. Young*, ii. 256.

e F. J. Durand.

f E. Veal.

11—15. (11) **the pattern,** or plan. This was given to Dav. by the Spirit, *v.* 12;[a] it consisted of a set of directions in writing. **porch,** 2 Chr. iii. 4. **houses,** holy place, and holy of holies. 2 Chr. iii. 5, 8. **treasuries,** chambers built round the outer wall. 1 Ki. vi. 5. **upper chambers,** either those over the treasuries, or chambers forming second story over porch, or holy place. **inner parlours,** 2 Chr. xxii. 11. (12) **courts,** round the building for the assembling of worshippers. **treasuries . . things,** separate buildings in the courts. (13) **courses,** already explained, ch. xxiii.—xxv. (14) **by weight,** fixing what should be the proportionate weights. (15) **lamps,** wh. fitted on the candlesticks.

Gold of Ophir (also 1 Ch. xxix. 4).—Nothing is said during the reign of David of voyages by sea, although Elath and Ezion-geber were under his authority; and in speaking of the offerings which he had prepared for the Lord, he refers to "three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir," which he had amassed. It is probable that his conquest was not sufficiently complete to enable Huram to undertake any commercial enterprise; and the gold of Ophir to which he alludes is, perhaps, a proof of the justness of the opinion which considers the name of Ophir as a general designation of all the countries of the south which furnished gold and precious stones, and of which little was known at that time, save by vague reports, that confounded the whole under one general appellation."[b]

David gives Solomon the pattern of the temple

a "The temple was not left to man's art or invention to contrive it, but was framed by Div. institution."—*Matt. Henry.*

Comp. xxv. 9, 14. "This expression (*v.* 12) may, however, only mean what he had in his spirit, *i. e.* floating in his mind."—*Jamieson*, after *Bertheau.*

"How few, like David, have God and gold together."—*G. Villiers.*

b Laborde.

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gold, etc., provided for the temple

a 1 Ki. vii. 48; 2 Chr. iv. 19.

b "The expanded wings of the cherubim formed what was figuratively styled the throne of God, and as they were emblematical of rapid motion, the throne or seat was spoken of as a chariot."—*Jamieson.*

Ps. xviii. 10, xcix. 1.

c Bib. Treas.

16—21. (16) **tables,** *etc.*, ten of these in the temple, all connected with the shewbread.[a] (17) **fleshhooks,** Ex. xxvii. 3; 1 Sa. ii. 13. **bowls,** Ex. xxvii. 3. **cups,** Ex. xxv. 29. (18) **chariot of the cherubim,** a figurative expression.[b] (19) **understand,** poss. this pattern was given Dav. in writing by one of the prophets. It is, however, more simple to suppose Dav. felt himself under special Div. guidance in forming the plan. (20) **fear not,** comp. Jos. i. 5—9. (21) **skilful man,** ch. xxii. 15.

The fear of God.—An African traveller tells us that when among one of the most degraded and savage tribes he met with, in one place his attention was attracted by the idol of the tribe stuck upon a high pole, as if intended to convey the idea that he could see all around the country and every one of the people. And such is their superstitious faith that they believe that every act of dishonesty would be seen by their god, if they were guilty of such an act, and that they would be punished accordingly. The effect of this faith (mistaken as it is) is such that no dishonest act is ever perpetrated within sight of this idol, and the most valuable property is perfectly secure. It would be well if our faith in and fear of God—the all-seeing, holy, and just God—were equal to theirs in an idol.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

B.C. 1015.

David exhorts Israel to aid in building the temple

a Es. i. 2, 5, ii. 3, 8; Ne. i. 1, ii. 8, vii. 2; Da. viii. 2.

b "Here they seem to signify stones of a dark brilliant colour, like the stibium prepared from it, and perhaps used for making cement."—*Wordsworth.*

1—5. (1) **palace,** Heb. *birah*, only found in later Heb., and prob. word of Persian origin.[a] (2) **onyx,** Ge. ii. 12. **glistering stones,** lit. stones of *peek*, an alkaline seaweed,[b] 2 Ki. ix. 30. **marble,** or white stones, perhaps alabaster. LXX. and Vulg. have *marble.* (3) **proper good,** or private property. (4) **overlay,** as with plating, or veneer. (5) **consecrate,** lit. *fill his hand:* "or come with full hands to Jehovah." It is an appeal for voluntary offerings.

A call to early devotedness (*v.* 5).—I. We shall explain what we regard as the consecration of service to God. 1. There must be correct views of the Divine character and claims; 2. A practical obedience to the will of God; 3. Active exertion to promote the Divine glory. II. We shall present the considerations which ought to urge to an engagement in the service of God. 1. We are placed under universal and imperative obligation to do so; 2. The influence His service has in preventing the degradation and promoting the dignity of our nature; 3. The true and solid pleasure His service communicates to the soul; 4. The glorious recompense by which the engagements of His service are consummated. III. We shall impress the question by which, to an engagement in the service of God, you are emphatically challenged.[c]

Consecration (*v.* 5).—An affecting incident was not long since related by Rev. Dr. Nevin, to show the spirit of consecration which the Church of Christ must have if she would extend her triumphs over the world. Two plain, poor people lived within the bounds of the church of which he was pastor. Their son presented himself and was received as member of the church. He attended Lafayette College, and finished his course in Princeton. He devoted himself to the missionary work in Africa.

v. 1. *Dr. W. F. Hook*, 107; *J. Parsons*, 389.

c J. Parsons.

"There is a quiet reposo and steadiness about the happiness of age, if the life has been well spent. Its feebleness is not painful. The nervous system has lost its acuteness. Even in

In fulfilling one of his engagements to preach, the vessel in which he sailed was capsized, and he was drowned. In the meantime the father had died, and the sad intelligence came with crushing weight on the heart of that old mother. She submitted, however, cheerfully to the Lord's dealings, with the remark,—"My son is nearer to me now, in heaven, than he was in Africa." She was poor, but had always managed, by the sale of her thread and other little articles of her manufacture, to lay by fifty dollars a year for the aid of her son in his good work. When the news came that he needed her aid no longer, she said with tears,—"Now my dear son is gone, my fifty dollars shall go to some other servant of Jesus Christ." How long would it take to convert the world, if every Christian had the same spirit of self-consecration as that poor mother?

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6—9. (6) **willingly,**[a] cheerfully responding to Dav.'s invitation. (7) **drams,** Heb. *adarconim*, comp. Ezr. viii. 27. It prob. equals the Persian *daric*,[b] known as the king's coin, and familiar to the Jews of the captivity. (8) **they,** *etc.*, comp. Ex. xxxv. 27. **by the hand,** or into the hand. **Jehiel,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 21. (9) **rejoiced,** at such readiness of giving, and in anticipation of the splendid temple.

Self-denial (*v.* 6).—The following incident was recorded some years since in the *New York Observer* :—A clergyman from one of the Western States visited the town of H——, New Hampshire. On the Sabbath he represented to the congregation the wants of a feeble church, in the place were he resided, who were then struggling to build a house of worship. A son of the clergyman of H——, a lad of twelve, and a Sabbath scholar, listened to the account with deep interest. After worship, he applied to his father for a few halfpence, which he wished to contribute to aid the feeble church. But the father, to his regret, was compelled to deny him, as he had just emptied his own purse for some benevolent object. The next day was the fourth of July. There was to be a splendid celebration near, and the boy had received promise of this as a holiday. In the evening, the father sent him a short distance on an errand. On his way he met with a farmer, to whom he offered his services for a moderate compensation. The farmer, being pressed in business, hired him : and the boy laboured faithfully all day, sacrificing the pleasures of his anticipated festivity for one shilling, which he joyfully contributed to aid the above-mentioned church.

10—13. (10) **blessed . . congregation,** such public thanksgiving suited such public virtue. Dav. acknowledged that even the grace of giving comes from God. (11) **thine,** *etc.*, these signs of wealth around him, Dav. would not permit to take his heart from God. The glory of all was due unto Him.[a] (12) **make great,** man does not do it, or win it, of himself. (13) **we thank,** speaking not for himself only, but in the name of the people.

The Lord the owner of all things (*v.* 11).—I. The evidence we have of this in Scripture. II. Inquire what is the ground of the Lord's proprietary in all things. He made all—1. For Himself ; 2. Of nothing ; 3. Without help ; and 4. Upholds all. III. The nature and quality of this proprietary. He is—1. The

mature years we feel that a burn, a scald, a cut, is more tolerable than it was in the sensitive period of youth.'—*Hastitt.*

"To worship rightly is to love each other, each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."—*Whittier.*

the people offered willingly

a Ex. xxv. 2; 2 Co. ix. 7.

b "The *daric* was a Persian gold coin, common among the Jews while under Persian rule. It usually bore the image of an archer with a tiara, and on the reverse an irregular square. The weight was about 128 grains troy.'—*Ayre.*

"Upon such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense."—*Shakespeare.*

"We can offer much in the large, but to make sacrifices in little things is what we are seldom equal to."—*Goethe.*

David publicly praises God

a Mat. vi. 13; 1 Ti. i. 17; Re. v. 13.

vv. 10—13. *Bp. Wordsworth*, iii. 17.

v. 11. *D. Clarkson*, 301; *Rice, Adams*, 24; *Bp. Douglas*, 351.

v. 12. *Dr. J. Erskine*, i. 230.

vv. 12, 13. *P. Bland*, 347

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b D. Clarkson. "Among all the other virtues, humility, the lowest, is pre-eminent. It is the safest, because it is always at anchor; and that man may be truly said to live the most content in his calling that strives to live within the compass of it."—*Richter.*

David prays for Solomon

a He. xi. 13; 1 Pe. ii. 11.

v. 14. *H. Melvill,* i. 66.

v. 15. *Dr. J. Brandt,* ii. 197; *Dalgleish,* 4; *G. J. Zollikoffer,* ii. 421; *B. Beddome,* viii. 91; *J. Hincks,* 1.

v. 16. *Bp. Broughton.* 222.

v. 18. *D. Clarkson, Morn. Exer.* i. 553.

v. 19. *Dr. D. Jennings,* 1; *Dr. J. Toulmin,* 421.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c J. Edwards.

Solomon enthroned king of Israel

a 2 Chr. i. 11, 12; Ec. ii. 9.

v. 20. *A. Roberts, Vil. Ser.* iv. 147. "What has surprised me most in history is to read of so few kings who have abdicated their thrones, — not above a dozen or primary; 2. Absolute; 3. Principal; 4. Total; 5. Perpetual; 6. Transcendently; 7. Sole ruler of all things.*b*

Humility (*vv.* 10—25).—A nobleman, who died some years ago, was in the habit of attending a prayer-meeting in the country village where he lived, and where a few poor people were accustomed to assemble to seek the presence of the Divine Majesty. It was at first customary for these humble persons to make way for him if he came in a little after the appointed time; but he expressed his unwillingness to receive this mark of respect, saying he should be satisfied to occupy the lowest station. In other places he thought he had a right to claim the distinctions of his rank; but there he felt himself in the same situation as themselves. Such conduct displayed genuine feelings of piety, which, arising superior to the artificial distinctions of society, rejoices in the fellowship of the body of Christians.

14—19. (14) **who am I,** all impressions of the goodness of God humble the receivers of it in the dust. (15) **strangers,***a* Ps. xxxix. 12. **none abiding,** lit. *no hope:* referring to the hope of abiding. Seeing how frail and how transitory our life is it seems strange that God should give us so much. (16) **thine own,** essentially then, and now by us willingly given to thee. (17) **triest the heart,** 1 Sa. xvi. 7. **uprightness,** Pr. xi. 20. (18) **keep this,** the remembrance of this day of liberal giving. **prepare,** lit. *establish.* (19) **perfect,** insense of entire sincerity.

Liberality in God's service commended (*vv.* 17, 18).—Consider these words—I. In reference to the history before us. 1. The grounds of his joy; 2. The expressions of his love. II. In reference to that which is typically represented by it. We are called to build the temple of the Church. 1. Let us offer willingly; 2. Let us offer bountifully; 3. Let us give in due order—the heart first.*b*

Human life (*v.* 15).—Our continuance in this world is but very short. Man's days on the earth are as a shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home. We were not born into this world for that end. Neither did God give us these temporal things, that we are accommodated with, for that end. If God has given us good estates, if we are settled in families, and God has given us children, or other friends that are very pleasant to us, it is with no such view or design that we should be furnished and provided for here as for a settled abode; but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them again in a very little time.*c*

20—25. (20) **blessed,** this was done by bowing down their heads together. **worshipped . . king,** the same attitude expressed their reverence, and the king was in a sense the representative of God. (21) **drink offerings,** Nu. xv. 5, 7, 10. (22) **second time,** for first time see 1 Ki. i. 35, 39. This was a more perfectly representative assembly. **Zadok,** 1 Ki. ii. 35. (23) **then Sol.,** *etc., i.e.* during some little of his father's lifetime. (24) **all the sons,** even Adonijah, 1 Ki. i. 53. (25) **magnified,** *etc.,* 1 Ki. iii. 13.*a*

Submission (*v.* 24).—The Hebrew has, for *submitted,* "gave the hand under." "To give the hand under" is a beautiful Orientalism to denote submission. See the man who wishes to submit to a superior: he stands at a short distance, then, stoop-

ing, he unceasingly moves his hands to the ground. and says, "I submit, my lord."—"You recollect having heard that Kandan and Chinnan had a serious quarrel?" "Yes, I heard it." "Well, they have settled the matter now, for Chinnan went to him last evening and 'gave his hand under.'"—"The Modeliar is no longer angry with me. because I have put down my hand to the ground."—"That rebellious son has. for many years. refused to acknowledge his father's authority; but he has at last put his hand under;" that is, he has submitted to him, has become obedient.[b]

26—30. (26) **thus,** as previously narrated. (27) **time,** *etc.,* more precisely given, 2 Sa. v. 5. (28) **old age,** prob. in his seventy-first year.[a] (29) **book of Nathan,**[b] of this, and book of God. we have no relics that can be identified. (30) **went over him,** a singular expression, meaning the affairs with wh. he was concerned; the scenes through wh. he was brought.

Life's changing current (*vv.* 29, 30).—I. Time makes a deep mark upon the body, the least important portion of our complex nature. II. Equally marked is the effect of "the times" as they pass over us, upon our intellectual nature. III. Not less striking or important is the stamp of time upon the history of our sensibilities. IV. The most important change connected with time is the one that refers to our moral and spiritual state. V. Our social and relative condition is subject to the constant mutations of time.[c]

Life a state of probation.—The truth of this principle, that the present life is a state of probation, and education to prepare us for another, is confirmed by everything which we see around us: it is the only key which can open to us the designs of Providence in the economy of human affairs, the only clue which can guide us through that pathless wilderness, and the only plan on which this world could possibly have been formed, or on which the history of it can be comprehended or explained. It could never have been formed on a plan of happiness, because it is everywhere overspread with innumerable miseries; nor of misery, because it is interspersed with many enjoyments; it could not have been constituted for a scene of wisdom and virtue, because the history of mankind is little more than a detail of their follies and wickedness; nor of vice, because that is no plan at all, being destructive of all existence, and consequently of its own. But on this system all that we here meet with may be easily accounted for; for this mixture of happiness and misery, of virtue and vice. necessarily results from a state of probation and education—as probation implies trials, sufferings, and a capacity of offending. and education a propriety of chastisement for those offences.[d]—*Life compared to a book.*—Man is like a book: his birth is the title-page; his baptism, the epistle dedicatory; his groans and crying, the epistle to the reader; his infancy and childhood, the argument or contents of the whole ensuing treatises; his life and actions are the subject; his sins and errors, the faults escaped; his repentance, the correction. As for the volumes, some are in folio, some in quarto, some in octavo, some much smaller; some are fairer bound, some plainer; some have piety and godliness for their subjects; others (and they too many) are mere romances, pamphlets of wantonness and folly: but in the last page of every one there stands a word, which is *Finis;* and

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two at the most."—*Sterne.*

"He was a king blessed of the King of kings."—*Shakespeare.*

b Roberts.

David dies in a good old age

a Spk. Com.

b Some think the existing books of Samuel are referred to; others prefer the idea that 3 distinct documents, not now extant, are cited.

vv. 27, 28. *Dr. S. Stennett,* iii. 177; *T. Buckridge,* 47.

vv. 29, 30. *A. Fuller, Wks.* 673.

c Dr. S. T. Spear.

"There appears to exist a greater desire to live long than to live well! Measure by man's desires, he cannot live long enough; measure by his good deeds, and he has not lived long enough; measure by his evil deeds, and he has lived too long."—*Zimmerman.*

d Soame Jenyns.

"The true estimate of being is not to be taken from age, but action. A man as he manages himself, may die old at thirty, and a child at fourscore. To nurse up the vital flame as long as the matter will last, is not always good husbandry 'Tis much better to cover it with an extinguisher of honour, than

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let it consume till it burn blue, and lies agonising within the socket; and at length goes out in no perfume. If the sun were not to rise again, methinks it would look look bigger for him to tumble from the sky at noon, with all his light and heat about him, than to gain a course of four or five hours, only to languish and decline in." —*Collier.*

e Spencer. "Amongst rational beings that life is longest, whether brief or protracted its outward term, into which the largest amount of mind, of mental and moral activity, is condensed. It is possible for the longest life to be really briefer than the shortest, and the child or youth may die older, with more of life crowded into his brief existence, than he whose dull and stagnant being drags on to an inglorious old age."—*Caird.* Men's lives should be like the day, more beautiful in the evening; or, like the summer, aglow with promise, and the autumn, rich with the golden sheaves where good works and deeds have ripened on the field.

f Bp. Horne.

this is the last word in every book. Such is the life of man: some longer, some shorter; some stronger, some weaker; some fairer, some coarser; some holy, some profane. But death comes in, like *finis*, at the last, and closes up all; for that is the end of all.[e]

The round of life.—

Some are serving—some commanding;
Some are sitting—some are standing;
Some rejoicing—some are grieving;
Some entreating—some relieving;
Some are weeping—some are laughing;
Some are thirsting—some are quaffing;
Some accepting—some refusing;
Some are thrifty—some abusing;
Some compelling—some persuading;
Some are flatt'ring—some degrading;
Some are patient—some are fuming;
Some are modest—some presuming;
Some are leasing—some are farming;
Some are helping—some are harming;
Some are running—some are riding;
Some departing—some abiding;
Some are sending—some are bringing;
Some are crying—some are singing;
Some are hearing—some are preaching;
Some are learning—some are teaching;
Some disdaining—some affecting;
Some assiduous—some neglecting;
Some are feasting—some are fasting;
Some are saving—some are wasting;
Some are losing—some are winning;
Some repenting—some are sinning;
Some professing—some adoring;
Some are silent—some are roaring;
Some are restive—some are willing;
Some preserving—some are killing;
Some are bounteous—some are grinding;
Some are seeking—some are finding;
Some are thieving—some are receiving;
Some are hiding—some revealing;
Some commending—some are blaming;
Some dismemb'ring—some new framing;
Some are quiet—some disputing;
Some confuted and confuting;
Some are marching—some retiring;
Some are resting—some aspiring;
Some enduring—some deriding;
Some are falling—some are rising.
These are sufficient to recite,
Since all men's deeds are infinite;
Some end their parts when some begin;
Some go out and some come in.[f]

THE SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES

Introduction.

I. Title. The two Bks. of Chrons., comprised in one by the anc. **Jews** were called by them "THE WORDS OF DAYS," or "ANNALS;" "prob. fr. the circumstance of their being compiled out of *diaries* or *annals*, in wh. were recorded the various events related in these books" (*Horne*). They are termed in the LXX. "The things that were left, or omitted" (PARALEIPOMENA), "bec. they supply omissions in the other historical books" (*Litton*). The title of Chronicles was given to them by Jerome, bec. they contain an abstract, in order of time, of the whole of the sacred history, to the time when they were written (see *Calmet* and *Dr. Clarke's* prefaces). **II. Time.** Not composed bef. time of Ezra, for it closes with the acc. that Cyrus, by an edict in the first yr. of his reign, allowed the Jews to return to their country (II. xxxvi. 22, *ff.*), and brings down the genealogical tree of Zerubbabel to his grandchildren. (I. iii. 19–21)—(*Keil*). **III. Author.** Gen. ascr. to Ezra. (1) They record the restoration by Cyrus (II. xxxvi. 21, 22), and mention the writings of Jer. (xxxv. 25); (2) The style is similar to his; (3) Its hist. seems a contin. of Kings (Ezra i. 1–3, *cf.* II. xxxvi. 23); (4) But, then, some portions (I. iii. 19—24) must have been added by a later writer (*Angus*). "However plausible these obs. may be, there are other marks . . . wh. tend to prove that Ezra did not write them" (*Horne*). **IV. Design.** Threefold:—(1) To fix the genealogies of the Hebs. returning fr. captiv., in order that the line of the descent of the Messiah might not be involved in confusion; (2) To descr. the orig. distr. of lands among the tribes and fams., in order that to ea. their anc. inheritance might return; (3) To facilitate the re-establishment of religious worship, by detailing the genealogies of the priests and Levites, and the ritual arrangements and reformations of David, and other pious kings (*Litton*). **V. Characteristics,** etc. The most remarkable feature in the historical books of Scripture, and especially of Kings and Chronicles, is their religious theocratic character. Secular history gives the public changes which nations have undergone, with their causes and results. Church history traces the progress of sentiment, and of various influences in relation to the Church. But here, King, Church, State, are all represented as under God. The character of each king is decided by his fidelity to the religious obligations of his office. Of each it is said, He walked in the ways of David his father and so prospered; or of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, and so failed. These books are valuable as the history of God, and His law in the nation, and that nation a monarchy: as the books of Joshua and Judges are the history of God and His law in an aristocracy or democracy; or as the earlier books are the history of God and His law in the family. In the Prophets, and in the Acts of the Apostles, we have glimpses of what is to be the history of God and His law in the world. Mark, therefore, the prominence given to the erection of the temple; the numerous references to the ancient law, especially when the two kingdoms were drawing to an end, as if to account for their decay and approaching fall; the frequent interposition of prophets, now rebuking the people, and now braving the sovereign; the deposition and succession of kings; and the connection everywhere traced between what seem to be mere political incidents and the fidelity or idolatry of the age (*Dr. Angus*).

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1—6. (1) **strengthened,** or established: his rights were recognised, and his position accepted.[a] **magnified him,** comp. 1 Chr. xxix. 25. (2) **captains,** *etc.*, 1 Chr. xxvii. 1, xxviii. 1. This was an assembly of all Israel *by their representatives.* **judges,** 1 Chr. xxiii. 4. **chief of the fathers,** or heads of families.[b] (3) **high place,** "the multiplied heights of the country were so many natural altars."[c] **Gibeon,** the height of Neby Samwil, towering immediately over the town of El-Jib. **tabernacle,** Ex. xxvi.[d] (4) **the ark,** 2 Sa. vi. 17. (5) **brazen altar,** Ex. xxvii. 1—8.[e] **he put,** marg. was there, *i.e.* at Gibeon. (6) **burnt offerings,** wh. required by law to be presented on this brazen altar.

God and the king (*v.* 1).—I. God is often against the kings of the earth. This is seen in the disasters which He brings on their armies, etc., and may be illustrated by the histories of many kings mentioned in the Bible. II. God is with some kings for the punishment of others. The wicked are the sword of God. III. God was with Solomon for the good of Israel: with him in answer to prayer. IV. God was not with Solomon unconditionally.

The emperor Alexander.—Alexander, the late emperor of Russia, in one of his journeys, came to a spot where they had just dragged out of the water a peasant who appeared to be lifeless. He instantly alighted, had the man laid on the side of the bank, and immediately proceeded to strip him, and to rub his temples, wrists, etc. Dr. Wyllie, his majesty's physician, attempted to bleed the patient, but in vain; and after three hours' fruitless attempts to recover him, the doctor declared that it was useless to proceed any farther. The emperor entreated Dr. Wyllie to persevere, and make another attempt to bleed him. The doctor, though he had not the slightest hope of success, proceeded to obey the injunctions of his majesty, who, with some of his attendants, made a last effort at rubbing. At length the emperor had the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing the blood make its appearance, while the poor peasant uttered a feeble groan. His majesty, in a transport of joy, exclaimed that this was the brightest day of his life, while tears stole involuntarily down his cheek. Their exertions were now redoubled; the emperor tore his handkerchief, and bound the arm of the patient, nor did he leave him till he was quite recovered. He then had him conveyed to a pla where proper care could be taken of him, ordered him a considerable present, and afterwards provided for him and his family.

7—12. (7) **in that night,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. iii. 5—15: fr. this it appears that God communicated with Sol. thro' his dream. (8) **me to reign,** the first case of a son succeeding his father. (9) **thy promise,** this is not mentioned in the parallel passage, 1 Ki. iii. 6. Possibly some special promise had been made to David concerning the wisdom of his successor. Comp. Ps. lxxii.[a]

Solomon's offering on Gibeon

a For Sol.'s early difficulties, see 1 Kings i., ii.

b "The Jewish system was still so far patriarchal that the heads of families continued to have a recognised status, if they had no longer any special civil function." —*Spk. Com.*

c "The national worship down to the time of Hezekiah may almost be said to have been a religion of high places." —*Stanley.*

d Comp. 1 Chr. xvi. 39, xxi. 29; 1 Ki. iii. 4.

e Ex. xxxi. 2, 9, xxxviii. 1.

"All men would be masters of others, and no man is lord of himself."—*Goethe.*

"A weak mind sinks under prosperity as well as under adversity. A strong and deep one has two highest tides,—when the moon is at the full and when there is no moon."—*Hare.*

Solomon prays for wisdom

a *Spk. Com.*

b "The ideal answer of such a

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prince, burdened with the responsibility of his position. He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom."—*Stanley.*

c This was only given conditionally. 1 Ki. iii. 14.

d Eccles. ii. 9.

e Dr. J. Von Oosterzee.

"God delights to hear and answer those prayers that are for His best blessings. When Solomon prayed for wisdom to rule his people, God was so pleased that He gave him wisdom in an eminent degree, and as an accession, riches and honour."—*Bates.*

f Prince.

Solomon's riches

a Wordsworth.

b Comp. 1 Ki. x. 26—29.

"The science of government is merely a science of combinations, of applications and of exceptions, according to time, place, and circumstances."—*Rousseau.*

"Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity; it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye, — glorious indeed in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument." —*Jeremy Taylor.*

like the dust, the numbers of the people brought the sense of responsibility to the young king. (10) **wisdom and knowledge,** comp. 1 Ki. iii. 9, the spirit of judgment and discernment.[b] (11) **long life,** for thyself.[c] (12) **give thee riches,** *etc.*, in addition, and as the natural result of such practical wisdom to rule and judge.[d]

The prayer for wisdom.—I. Come and see a youth who at a critical moment is found in prayer. II. Come and see a king's son who prays exclusively for wisdom. III. Come and see a humble one who prays not in vain. IV. Come and see here a favoured one, who receives much more than he asks for. V. Come and see an unhappy one who by his own fault has forfeited the blessing of his prayer.[e]

Who are the wise?—

Who are the wise?
They who have govern'd with a self-control
Each wild and baneful passion of the soul;
Curb'd the strong impulse of all fierce desires,
But kept alive affection's purer fires;
They who have pass'd the labyrinth of life,
Without one hour of weakness or of strife;
Prepared each change of fortune to endure,
Humble though rich, and dignified though poor;
Skill'd in the latent movements of the heart,
Learn'd in the lore which nature can impart,
Teaching that sweet philosophy aloud
Which sees the "silver lining" of the cloud,
Looking for good in all beneath the skies—
These are the truly wise![f]

13—17. (13) **came,** *etc.*, some think the word Gibeon here is used for *a hill*;[a] there is a difficulty in the reading, but the fact mentioned is Sol.'s return to Jerus. (14) **Solomon,** *etc.*,[b] multiplying horses was one of the things forbidden to Israelite kings. It indicates the closeness of his relations with Egypt. **chariot cities,** depots, or stables, erected at the frontiers of his kingdom, partly for the trade in chariots and horses which he carried on. (15) **cedar trees,** valued for their scent, and bec. their transit made them expensive. (16) **linen yarn,** of this the king seems to have held the monopoly. (17) **kings . . Syria,** these being in alliance with Sol., shared the benefits of his prosperity.

The royal merchant (*v.* 16).—I. Some of the advantages of commerce. 1. It promotes peace; 2. It encourages industry; 3. It stimulates investigation into the resources of nature. II. Sovereigns may very greatly aid in the development of commerce and trade. This has been often done in our own land. Royalty has often set the fashion in the consumption of the production of the articles of depressed industries. III. A great blessing for a country when it has a sovereign who regards the various industries of the people.

Influence of commerce.—Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men; it unites them by one of the strongest of all ties, the desire of supplying their mutual wants. It disposes them to peace by establishing in every state an order of citizens bound by their interest to be the guardians of public tranquillity. As soon as the commercial

spirit acquires vigour, and begins to gain an ascendant in any society, we discern a new genius in its policy, its alliances, its wars, and its negociations.[c]

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c *Robertson.*

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preparations for building the temple

1—6. (1) **determined,** better, commanded.[a] **house for his kingdom,** prob. referring to his own palace.[b] (2) **told out,** set apart for this work. **six hundred,** number given in 1 Ki. v. 16, is three hundred. (3) **Huram,** or *Hiram,* seems to be a later form of the word. **as . . father,** 1 Chr. xiv. 1; 2 Sa. v. 11. (4) **burn,** *etc.,* Ex. xxx. 7, 34—36. **continual shewbread,** Ex. xxv. 30; Nu, iv. 7. **new moons,** Nu. xxviii. 11—15. **solemn feasts,** the three great annual feasts. (5) **great,** not in mere size, but in all required for its erection and adornment. (6) **but who,** *etc.,* "this pious strain of sentiment well became the king of Israel."[c]

a 1 Ki. v. 5.

b 2 Chr. vii. 11, viii. 1; 1 Ki. vii. 1—12.

c *Jamieson.*

"Monarch, thou wishest to cover thyself with glory, be the first to submit to the laws of thy empire."—*Bias.*

A son taking up a father's labours (*v.* 3).—I. A father's happiness must be very considerably increased by knowing that after his decease his son will continue his useful labours. II. Solomon entered upon his father's labours, and fulfilled his father's contracts. III. There is one work that a son, however dutiful, cannot finish for his father. A son may complete his father's unfinished house, but he cannot complete any personal building for eternity that his father may have left undone.

"Order is a lovely nymph the child of beauty and wisdom; her attendants are comfort, neatness, and activity; her abode is the valley of happiness: she is always to be found when sought for, and never appears so lovely as when contrasted with her opponent,—disorder."—*Johnson.*

The last words of Christ (*v.* 4).—This expression of the dying Redeemer on the cross has been variously interpreted. Some make it refer to the entire fulfilment of prophecy in His sufferings. Others explain it, as if the Saviour were declaring that, at the moment when He spoke, the work of human redemption was completed. Others take the expression as meaning, all the types of the ancient law are accomplished; which perhaps is open to no other objection than that there does not appear to be, in the immediate connection, a reference to those types. Ancient Jewish custom, as to the announcement of new moons, may explain the expression. The Israelites were accustomed to keep the first day of every new moon holy to the Lord. Great care was therefore necessary to observe the change of that luminary; and whenever a new moon appeared, notice had to be given immediately to the great council, the president of which announced the fact with a loud voice. The expression he employed, translated into Greek, according to Leigh's *Critica Sacra,* would be the very word employed by Christ. This word was afterwards twice repeated by the people aloud, and proclaimed generally by sound of trumpet (Reland, *Antiq. Hæb.,* p. 436). The observance of the new moon, like other legal observances, was typical. If it referred to the gladness of the Gospel day, Christ's last words become full of meaning: "It is finished." A time of new light and mercy is opening upon the world, the proclamation of which is now to be made, Mark xvi. 15.

"All things being in order; so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the Ordainer of order, and mystical mathematics of the city of heaven." — *Sir Thomas Browne.*

"Doubtless the example set by rulers insinuated itself into the common herd."—*Claudianus.*

the message to Huram

7—10. (7) **a man cunning,** *etc.,* 1 Ki. vii. 13, 14. (8) **algum,** or *almug,* most prob. *sandal-wood* fr. China and the Indian Archipelago.[a] (9) **wonderful great,** lit. great and wonderful. (10) **beaten wheat,** lit. *wheat of strokes:*[b] but

a "Gesenius suggests that this

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timber was exported fr. Tyre, after having been brought thither from the East." — *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

b *Gesenius.*

"Wheat, stripped of the husk, boiled, and saturated with butter, forms a frequent meal with the labouring people of the East."—*Jamieson.*

"In all governments there must of necessity be both the law and the sword; laws without arms would give us not liberty but licentiousness, and arms without laws would produce not subjection but slavery."—*Colton.*

c *Percy Anec.*

Huram's reply

a "In the Persian inscriptions *Ormazd* is constantly called 'the great God, who gave' (or made) 'heaven and earth.'" — *Spk. Com.*

b *Wordsworth.*

c 1 Ki. vii. 13, 14.

"The aggregate happiness of society, which is best promoted by the practice of a virtuous policy, is, or ought to be, the end of all government."—*Washington.*

v. 11. *B. Ibbot*, ii 374.

v. 12. *J. Riddoch*, ii. 55.

comp. 1 Ki. v. 11. Some of these provisions were for the immediate use of the workmen. The account given in the Bk. of Kings differs greatly from this, mentioning only the yearly tribute.

A royal patron of art (*v.* 7).—I. Art considered as an educator. II. Popular taste influences the fine arts. This very much affected by the talent of renowned artists. Thus the skill of Landseer made the drawings of animals popular. This, doubtless, had a humanising tendency. III. But more than popular taste is needed to popularise high art. Take as an illustration Miss Thompson's now celebrated picture. IV. A good thing for a nation when royalty patronises art in the direction of its employment in the service of religion. V. This did Solomon, who would have God's house not only beautiful, but beautiful in the highest degree.

Sir Peter Leley.—After the death of Vandyke, Sir Peter Leley became state painter to Charles II. He was eminent in portraits, and possessed the art of flattery more than most artists, which gained him extensive practice, and an ample fortune. The expression of his portraits is almost entirely described, at least in those of his females, by what the poet has said, that he

"———— on animated canvas stole
The sleeping eye that spoke the melting soul."

Sir Peter Leley employed a large portion of his fortune to furnish himself with a collection of pictures and drawings, by studying which he much improved his style. These at his death were sold by auction, and were so numerous that forty days were consumed in the sale, and the produce amounted to £26,000; independent of which, he left an estate he had purchased of £900 a year.c

11–16. (11) **in writing,** Sol.'s message had prob. been conveyed by an ambassador. **loved his people,** comp. 1 Ki. x. 9; 2 Chr. ix. 8. (12) **made heaven and earth,** a usual formula for the Supreme Being.a. (13) **of Huram my father's,** should be trans. *my master-workman;* the word father is used in the honourable sense of master.b "Huram the king's own father's name appears to have been *Abibaal.*" (14) **man of Tyre,**c poss. a second husband of the woman. (15) **wheat,** *etc.*, *v.* 10. (16) **in flotes,** the trees tied together, and floating on the water. **Joppa,** Jos. xix. 46, the natural port of Jerus., but 35 miles distant.

A God-sent king (*v.* 11).—I. A good king is a great blessing for a people. II. A good king is a Divine gift. III. A good king thus sent is a proof of God's regard for the people. IV. This teaches, by inference, that kings should regard themselves as reigning for the people's good, and not for private ends.

The perfection of art.—Pygmalion was a sculptor of wonderful skill. He carved a statue in ivory, of a maiden, that seemed to be alive. He fell in love with his own beautiful creation. He clothed it in rich apparel, caressed it, decked it with jewels, and brought it such gifts as are prized by girls. He laid it upon a royal couch, and called it his wife. He went to worship at the shrine of Venus, and asked the gods to give him a wife like his ivory virgin. He returned to his house, and began to caress his ideal wife as he used to do, when lo! he felt the ivory yield to his touch. "It was, indeed, alive. The virgin felt the kisses,

and blushed, and, opening her timid eyes to the light, fixed them at the same moment upon her lover."

17, 18. (17) **strangers,** descendants of the Canaanites who had not been expelled at the invasion. This numbering was made so as to impose on them bond service. (18) **bearers of burdens,** labourers. Comp. 1 Ki. v. 16. **set . . work,** no work is done in the East without overseers, who doing nothing themselves see that other people are diligent.

Naturalisation of foreigners (*vv.* 17, 18).—I. A good government will tend to make a country attractive to foreigners. II. Foreigners thus attracted are amenable to the laws of the state. III. Thus protected they may contribute materially to the enrichment of a state by the importation of foreign industries. IV. The kind treatment of exiles often repays those who so regard them. Ill.:—The silk-weavers of Spitalfields. V. Be kind to strangers.

Legend of industry.—Some centuries ago, a man resident in Egypt became a convert to the Christian faith. The spirit of the times favoured asceticism; and he, being of a contemplative mind, conceived the unnatural idea that if he could retire from society and spend his time in contemplation he should attain to the perfection of human happiness on earth. Filled with this thought he bade adieu to the abodes of men, wandered far into the desert, selected a cave near which flowed a spring, for his home, and, subsisting on the scanty crops of roots and herbs which sprang up spontaneously in the adjacent glens and valleys, began his life of meditation and prayer. He had not spent many seasons in his hermitage before his heart grew miserable beyond endurance. The long and weary hours of the day, and the dreary, interminable nights, oppressed and crushed his listless soul. In the extremity of his wretchedness, he fell upon his face, and cried, "Father, call home Thy child! Let me die! I am weary of life." Thus stricken with grief, he fell asleep; and in his vision an angel stood before him, and spake, saying, "Cut down the palm tree that grows by yon spring, and of its fibres construct a rope." The vision passed away; and the hermit awoke with a resolution to fulfil his mission. But he had no axe, and therefore journeyed far to procure one. On his return he felled the tree, and diligently laboured till its fibres lay at his feet, formed into a coil of rope. Again the angel stood before him, and said, "Dominic, you are now no longer weary of life, but you are happy. Know, then, that man was made for labour, and that prayer also is his duty. Both are essential to his happiness. Go, therefore, into the world, with the rope girded upon thy loins. Let it be a memorial to thee of what God expects from man."[a]

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the census of the strangers

The manufacture of silk was established in Spitalfields by emigrants from France, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

"The administration of Government, like a guardianship, ought to be directed to the good of those who confer, and not to those who receive the trust."—*Cicero.*

"If you ask me which is the real hereditary sin of human nature, do you imagine I shall answer, pride, or luxury, or ambition, or egotism? No; I shall say indolence. Who conquers indolence will conquer all the rest. Indeed, all good principles must stagnate without mental activity."—*Zimmerman.*

"Virtue, though chained to earth, will still live free, and hell itself must yield to industry."—*Ben Jonson.*

"The most important point in any affair is to know what is to be done."—*Columella.*

a Dr. Wise.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

B.C. 1012.

1—5. (1) **mount Moriah,** Gen. xxii. 2. **where appeared,** better read, *wh. was shown to David his father.* **had prepared,** 1 Chr. xxii. 1—5. **Ornan,** called also *Araunah.*[a] (2) **second,** word *day* is not in the original, and prob. the word *second* should **be** omitted.[b] (3) **instructed,** marg. *founded.* Better read this

the building of the temple

a 2 Sa. xxiv. 18; 1 Chr. xxi. 18.

b It is omitted in

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the Sept., Syr., Arab, and Vulg. versions.

c The Jews carried the Babylonian measures back with them on returning to their own land.

d Spk. Com. proposes to read 20 for 120; *Wordsworth* thinks the height as given here should be retained.

e Comp. 1 Ki. vi. 15—18.

"They who are not made saints in a state of grace shall never be saints in glory. The stones which are appointed for that glorious temple above are hewn and polished and prepared for it here, as the stones were wrought and prepared in the mountains for the building of the temple at Jerusalem."—*Leighton.*

"It is better to have nothing to do, than to be doing nothing."—*Attius.*

f Ruskin.

the ornaments of the temple

a Vulgate.

b Bertheau. See 1 Chr. xxix. 2.

c 1 Ki. vi. 20.

d "Three suggestions have been made:—1. They were chambers built over the holy of holies. 2. They were built as second story of the porch. 3. The upper range of the sets of side chambers is referred to. The last suggestion is

is the ground-plan, or these are the dimensions. **first measure,** according to the ancient Mosaic standard.*e* (4) **height,** *etc.*, the height is not given in the Bk. of Kings. If this be correct it would give the porch the appearance of entrance towers.*d* (5) **greater house,** the holy place.*e*

The Great Architect's pupil (*v.* 3).—I. Solomon did not surrender himself to the guidance of his own taste or judgment in building the temple. II. He received a lesson of his father. III. He was especially taught of God. Well for men if in their common building undertakings they would seek Divine direction as to the purpose and propriety of their erections. Note what is said in the Gospels about building. Illustration:—The man who would pull down his barns and build greater.

The poetry of art.—It is a shallow criticism that would define poetry as confined to literary productions in rhyme and metre. The written poem is only poetry *talking*, and the statue, the picture, and the musical composition, are poetry *acting*. Milton and Goethe, at their desks, were not more truly poets than Phidias with his chisel, Raphael at his easel, or deaf Beethoven bending over his piano, inventing and producing strains which he himself could never hope to hear. The love of the ideal, the clinging to and striving after first principles of beauty, is ever the characteristic of the poet, and whether he speak his truth to the world through the medium of the pen, the perfect statue, or the lofty strain, he is still the sharer in the same high nature. Next to blind Milton describing Paradise, that same Beethoven composing symphonics and oratorios is one of the finest things we know. Milton saw not, and Beethoven heard not; but the sense of beauty was upon them, and they fain must speak. Arts may be learned by application—proportions and attitudes may be studied and repeated—mathematical principles may be, and have been, comprehended and adopted; but yet there has not been hewn from the marble a second Apollo, and no measuring by compasses will ever give the secret of its power. The ideal dwelt in the sculptor's mind and his hands fashioned a statue which yet teaches it to the world.*f*

6—10. (6) **precious stones,** either *marbles*,*a* or *gems*.*b* **Parvaim,** not certainly identified: prob. a district of Arabia. (7) **with gold,** *i.e.* gold plating. 1 Ki. vi. 29, 30. (8) **most holy house,** also called *the oracle:* a dark inner chamber.*c* **six hundred talents,** comp. 1 Ki. x. 14. (9) **nails,** wh. fastened the gold plating. **upper chambers,** it cannot be certainly known what these were.*d* (10) **two cherubim,** large figures standing on each side of the ark.*e* **image work,** *tsaatuim*, a word only found here. Prob. of Arabic origin, and meaning *carved work*.*f*

The surpassing beauty of the temple (*v.* 6).—Observe—I. That God did not need this lavish expenditure of gold and gems and rich ornament. They were all perishable things. II. Yet Divine condescension accepted this offering of human gratitude. III. The beauty and costliness of the temple not without their uses. The temple so adorned served to impress the mind of surrounding nations with the feelings of the people of Israel towards their great God. IV. The adornment of the temple a rebuke of the utilitarian views of those who are advocates of a Judas-like

economy, and who regard as waste all that is given to God beyond the bare necessities of the case.

Art and the higher wisdom.—King Pyrrhus being asked whether Pythion or Cephesias was the best flute-player, answered, that in his judgment, Polysperchan was the best *captain;* intimating that it was not worth the inquiring who was the best skilled in those arts which were so little important. Lord! let me be totally ignorant of those arts which are wicked and vain. Well may the children of this world be wiser in those things than the children of light. The seed of Cain are storied to have been the first inventors of arts. They might well excel in that upon which their hearts were wholly intent; but the pious seed had aims above, and might well overlook what others saw whose eyes were fixed below. When God comes to reckon up the wisdom of the world, those only will be accounted wise who are so for heaven.

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11—17. (11) **wings,** *etc.,*[f] 1 Ki. vi. 24—27. (12) **reaching to the wall,** so the wings stretched across from wall to wall, and met over the ark. (13) **inward,** marg. *towards the house: i.e.* outward, they were not looking at each other.[a] (14) **the vail,** separating the holy of holies fr. holy place.[b] This is not noticed in Bk. of Kings, only the chains of gold connected with it.[c] (15) **before the house,** either standing separate, or supporting the porch: prob. the former. The heights given differ fr. those in 1 Ki. vii. 15.[d] (16) **chains,** chaplets or festoons. **pomegranates,** 1 Ki. vii. 15—20. (17) **Jachin,** *direction,* or he will establish. **Boaz,** *strength,* or in strength.[e]

The mission of art.—You need not go to old Rome and Athens to find the beautiful. When democratic beauty once is opened up, you will have an idea of beauty that will turn to shame aristocratic, monarchic, and monocratic beauty. A true, Christian, democratic beauty has more elements, more complexity, and more power, and when it has been developed it will be more glorious, than any that has ever existed. Why, in the palmy days of Athens, when her magnificent temples were in their glory, when her statues were abundant—that are the admiration and despair of the world—and when her walls were painted so that nature found itself reflected more beautiful in art than in herself, what was the condition of her streets? They were so nasty that people could not walk in them! The common people lived in huts that were no better than our pigsties! No man except the king and the priest was rich enough in those days to have a picture in his house. Art belonged to the king—that is, the government, and to the priest—that is, the Church. It was the privilege of these two sections of society. The great mass of men knew nothing of it. It was to them something like the stars that they might worship, but that did not belong to them. We go back to the time when Rome was in her glory, and look with envy upon the development of art then. But what was then the condition of art? It had been widened, it had been purified, and it had grander ideas and conceptions; but, so far as mankind were concerned, it was in the hands of the rich and of the ecclesiastical orders mainly. It did a great deal of good, and its usefulness was felt in a broad sphere; but that was not its broadest sphere. Still travelling downward, art is on a mission for the great common people. It is to educate them. It is to

the most likely one to be true.

e 1 Ki. vi. 23—28.

f Gesenius.

"A statesman, we are told, should follow public opinion. Doubtless, as a coachman follows his horses, having hold on the reins and guiding them."—*Hare.*

the cherubims and the pillars

a Comp. Ex. xxxvii. 9.

b Comp. vail of tabernacle, Ex. xxvi. 31.

c 1 Ki. vi. 21.

d "Poss. a corruption of the number in the present passage in consequence of the resemblance bet. the Heb. signs for 18 and 35."—*Spk. Com.*

e "Poss. these are proper names, and may belong to supposed younger sons of Solomon."—*Ewald.*

"One of the most important, but one of the most difficult things to a powerful mind, is to be its own master; a pond may lie quiet in a plain, but a lake wants mountains to compass and hold it."—*Addison.*

There is in all men a provoking love of quiet comfort; they are like dogs, who will let themselves be fondled for ever

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so long before they get up. Once moved, however, it is just as difficult to keep quiet. Our first piece of activity costs us more trouble than all subsequent ones.

f Beecher.

elevate them. It is to refine them. It is to do its work now, no longer for the palace, no longer for the temple, but for that which has something of both the palace and the temple in it—for the family. Art is aiming at the household; and when it shall have done its work there, it will be with such resplendent and wondrous fruits as shall make all the past as nothing in the comparison. We are just on the eve of this great development. The wealth of the world is increasing, so that men are beginning to be able to make their houses richer than Grecian temples used to be.*f*

B.C. 1012.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

the altar, molten sea, etc.

1—8. (1) **made,** it is uncertain whether this was wholly new, or the brazen altar from the tabernacle enlarged or recast.[a] **ten cubits the height,** wh. necessitated either steps, or an inclined plane. (2) **molten sea,** 1 Ki. vii. 23. (3) **oxen,** comp. 1 Ki. vii. 24. (4, 5) **it stood,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. vii. 25, 26. (5) **with flowers of lilies,** shaped like the flower of a lily. (6) **lavers,** for washing utensils; the sea being for the bathing of the priests. (7) **candlesticks . . form,** after the model of that made by Moses (Ex. xxv. 31), or as *v.* 20. (8) **ten tables,** instead of the one in the tabernacle. Prob. in temple shew-bread was only placed on one.[b]

a "The thickness of the metal used for this altar is nowhere given; but supposing it to have been 3 inches, the whole weight of the metal would not be under 200 tons." —*Napier.*

b Wordsworth.

The fine arts.—At what period of the world's history have the fine arts subserved the interests of the truth as it is in Jesus? They have abundantly subserved the purposes of human pride and glory. How they have been used to beautify and throw a halo around vice and falsehood may be seen from the relation in which they have stood to the mythology of Paganism, and the idolatries of Romanism and Ecclesiasticism. They are so employed now. They will be abundantly used to give beauty and attractiveness to that coming period when the fool shall say in his heart, "There is no God." But what is an adorned world without God?

v. 1. *S. Mather, Figures and Types,* 364.

"Which is the best government? That which teaches self-government."—*Goethe.*

the courts, utensils, etc.

9—18. (9) **court,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. vi. 36. **great court,** for the congregation. (10) **sea,** the great brazen sea. (11) **pots,** *etc.*,[a] various articles necessary for the sacrifices. (12) **pommels,** or knobs. **chapiter,**[b] the upper part, or capital, of a column. (13) **pomegranates,**[c] 1 Ki. vii. 20. (14) **bases,** ornamental stands for the lavers. (15) **sea,** *v.* 2. (16) **his father,** *i.e.* his master-workman, or chief designer. (17) **Succoth,** Ge. xxxiii. 17. **Zeredathah,**[d] 1 Ki. xi. 26. (18) **found out,** so freely used that they ceased to take the weights of it.

a "Cooking-utensils of various sizes and depths, with their covers, are always made of whitened copper. This mineral is obtained in large quantities, and of the best quality, fr. the mines in Armenia, in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, wh. are worked exclusively by Greeks, and seem to be inexhaustible, though they have doubtless yielded their treasures to man

Diffusion of art.—

> Ecstatic she diffused
> The canvas, seiz'd the pallet, with quick hand
> The colours brew'd: and on the void expanse
> Her gay creation pour'd, her mimic world.
> Poor was the manner of her eldest race,
> Barren and dry; just struggling from the taste,
> That had for ages scared in cloisters dim
> The superstitions herds: yet glorious then
> Were deem'd their works; where undeveloped lay
> The future wonders that enrich'd mankind,

And a new light and grace o'er Europe cast.
Arts gradual gather streams. Enlarging this,
To each his portion of her various gifts
The goddess dealt, to none indulging all;
No, not to Raphael. At kind distance still
Perfection stands, like Happiness, to tempt
The eternal chase. In elegant design,
Improving nature; in ideas fair,
Or great, extracted from the fine antique;
In attitude, expression, airs divine;
The sons of Rome and Florence bore the prize.
To those of Venice, she the magic art
Of colours melting into colours gave:
Theirs too it was by one embracing mass
Of light and shade, that settles round the whole,
Or varies tremulous from part to part,
O'er all a binding harmony to throw,
To raise the picture and repose the sight.
The Lombard school, succeeding, mingled both.[e]

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fr. time immemorial." — *Van Lennep.*

b Fr. Lat. *capitulum*, fr. *caput*, a head.

c Fr. Lat. *pomum*, an apple.

d Comp. Jos. iii. 16; Ju vii. 22; 1 Ki. iv. 12, vii. 46.

"The idle, who are neither wise for this world nor the next, are emphatically fools at large."— *Archbishop Tillotson.*

e Thomson.

19—22. (19) **vessels,** articles of furniture. (20) **after the manner,**[a] comp. *v.* 7. (21) **flowers,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. vii. 49. (22) **entry,** *see* 1 Ki. vii. 50, where we find *hinges.*

Art and tobacco.—It is not possible for a labouring man to buy an oil painting, but it is possible for him to buy a chromo-lithograph; it is possible for him to buy a lithographic print; it is possible for him to buy engravings. The mode of multiplying copies of fine pictures is becoming so facile and admirable, that it is in the power of a man, for a few dollars, to have copies of the master thoughts and works of ages. What would in my boyhood have cost a small fortune, can now be had easily, if a man will substitute pictures for tobacco. If a man, instead of tanning his mouth and smoking his head, would lay out for pictures what **he** expends for tobacco, it would make all the difference in **his** dwelling between walls handsomely decorated and pleasant, and walls without decoration, bald and cold. Not that I would infringe upon your liberty of using tobacco. That is a precious liberty which I do not touch. I give you no advice. I merely say that the annual cost of tobacco would more than furnish, every year, a room in your house for your children. If you see more pictures, evanescent, in the indulgence of tobacco, and have more pleasure in them than you would in works of art —that is your liberty. Your children, perhaps, may have a right to say something; your companion, perhaps, may; but I say nothing.[b]

the golden vessels, etc.

a Ex. xxvii. 20, 21; Le. xxiv. 2, 3.

"Rather do what is nothing to the purpose than be idle, that the devil may find thee doing. The bird that sits is easily shot, when fliers escape the fowler. Idleness is the dead sea that swallows all the virtues, and the self-made sepulchre of a living man." — *Quarles.*

"To me more dear, congenial to my heart, one native charm, than all the gloss of art" — *Goldsmith.*

b Beecher.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

B.C. 1043.

1—5. (1) **things . . dedicated,** beyond what was actually necessary for the building, to increase the impression of its riches.[a] **the treasures,** preserved in the side store-chambers. (2) **Sol. assembled,** 1 Ki. viii. 1. (3) **the feast,** of tabernacles. (4) **Levites . . ark,** properly the work of the priests, they are here called by their general tribal name.[b] (5) **tabernacle,** this was brought fr. Gibeon;[c] so there must have been two processions.

dedicated treasures, the ark, etc.

a 1 Chr. xviii. 11.

b Comp. 1 Ki. viii. 3.

c 2 Chr. i. 3.

"There is no

B.C. 1005

slight danger from general ignorance; and the only choice wh. Provid nce has graciously left to a vicious government, is either to fall by the people, if they are suffered to become enlightened, or with them, if they are kept enslaved and ignorant." — *Coleridge.*

"Idleness is the badge of gentry, the bane of body and mind, the nurse of naughtiness, the stepmother of discipline, the chief author of all mischief, one of the seven deadly sins, the cushion upon which the devil chiefly reposes, and a great cause, not only of melancholy, but of many other diseases: for the mind is naturally active; and if it be not occupied about some honest business, it rushes into mischief or sinks into melancholy."—*Burton.*

"In every rank, or great or small, 'tis industry supports us all."—*Gay.*

d Lord St. Leonards.

the ark

a "According to an Arabian historian, the Caliph Moktader sacrificed during his pilgrimage to Mecca, in the year of the Hegira 350, 40,000 camels and cows

A royal executor (*v.* 1).—I. An interesting historical incident. It was considered worthy of note by the inspired penman— 1. That David before he died dedicated certain things to God; 2. That Solomon carried out the desires of his father. II. An example worthy of imitation. 1. What more commendable than such conduct in a son; 2. How frequently are the wishes of pious relatives evaded by their worldly-minded heirs; 3. The known wish of the deceased should be as binding as a duly attested will.

How to execute a will.—But not to trouble you with nice distinctions, I advise you to make your will in the following manner:—Take care that if written on several separate sheets of paper, they are all fastened together, and that the pages are numbered. Sign your name at the bottom of each sheet, and state at the end of your will of how many pages your will consists. If there are any erasures or interlineations, put your initials in the margin opposite to them, and notice them in the attestation. The attestation should be already written at the end of the will. . . The two persons intended to be the witnesses should be called in, and told that you desire them to witness your will, and then you should sign your name in their presence, and desire them each to look at the signature. Your signature should follow your will, but should precede the signatures of the witnesses, for if you were to sign after they have signed, your will would be void. When, therefore, you have signed, they should sign their names and residences at the foot of the attestation. You will observe, that according to the attestation, neither of the witnesses, although he has signed the attestation, should leave the room until the other witness has signed also. Remember that they must both sign in your presence, and therefore you should not allow them to go into another room to sign, or even into any recess, or any other part of the same room where it is possible that you may not be able to see them sign. If, therefore, you do not choose them to sign after you at the same table or desk, have a table placed close to you before they come into the room, so as to create no confusion, at which they can and ought to sign before leaving the room. If you were to send your servant, who happened to be one of your intended witnesses, out of the room, even for a table, he must leave the room before you sign. If after your death a question were to arise upon the fact of your having signed in the presence of both of the witnesses present at the same time, the man would of course admit that he left the room before you did sign, and then imagine what reliance would be placed upon that fact in cross-examination, and in the address to the jury. The precaution which I recommend would prevent this difficulty from arising.*d*

6—10. (6) **not be told,**[a] 1 Ki. viii. 5; these provided materials for the great national feast, as well as for sacrifices. (7) **under the wing,** those which met in the middle of the room. (8) **covered,** or shaded. (9) **drew out,** as an intimation that the ark was not to be moved again: they rested in the outer rings, so made a barrier on either side of the priest's approach to the ark. **from the ark,** should be from the holy place.[b] (10) **nothing,** 1 Ki. viii. 9.

Things that remain (*v.* 9).—Among the things that remain unto

this day are—I. Sin, and its consequences in the physical and mental and moral world. II. Redemption, and its possible application by the energy of the Holy Ghost. III. Heaven, and all its unimagined glories, as the inheritance of the saints. IV. Hell, and all its woes, as the lot of the finally impenitent. V. The judgment, as the test of character, and final decision of a righteous God.

Late comers to worship.—There are practices tolerated in religious congregations which Christians who are jealous for the honour of their Master's house should utterly condemn. Decorum is the handmaid of devotional feeling, and for this reason the house of God should never be disturbed by the slightest approach to irreverence. "It is a part of my religion," said a pious old lady, when asked why she went early to church; "it is a part of my religion not to interrupt the religion of others." And we believe if many a country congregation made it a part of their religion not to twist their necks almost out of joint to witness the entrance of every person who passes up the aisle during service, it would be better both for their necks and their religion. A gross abuse of religious decorum sometimes needs harsh medicine as a remedy. We give that adopted by Henry Clay Dean, who was at one time Chaplain of Congress. The anecdote is from the *Pacific Methodist*:—"Being worried one afternoon by this turning practice in his congregation, Mr. Dean stopped in his sermon, and said, 'Now, you listen to me, and I'll tell you who the people are as each one of them comes in.' He then went on with his discourse, until a gentleman entered, when he bawled out like an usher, 'Deacon A——, who keeps the shop over the way,' and then went on with his sermon. Presently another man passed up the aisle, and his name, residence, and occupation were given; so he continued for some time. At length some one entered the door who was unknown to Mr. Dean, when he cried out, 'A little old man, with drab coat and an old white hat; don't know him—look for yourselves.' That congregation was cured."

11–14. (11) by course,[a] for this great occasion the usual order was suspended, and all the priests present took part. (12) **singers,** 1 Chr. xxv. 1—6. **sounding,** *etc.*, making loud and continuous blasts.[b] (13) **good,** Ps. cxxxvi.; this was shouted when notice came that the ark had found rest. **cloud,** the well-known symbol of the Div. presence: the sign of His taking up His abode in the temple.[c] (14) **stand to minister,** it was a bright cloud, and so too dazzling for them.

The use of church music (*vv.* 13, 14).—Every duty which we owe to God is excellent in its season. The duty of praise seems to claim a just preference before all others, because in all others we receive from God; whereas in this we give to God. Consider —I. The manner in which they praised God. II. The subject matter of their praise. III. The token which God gave them of His approbation.[d]

White dresses.—No person in Greece and Italy appeared at an entertainment in black, because it was a colour reserved for times of mourning, but always in white, or some other cheerful colour, which corresponded with the joyous nature of the occasion. Such were the garments of salvation in which the people of Israel celebrated their festivals, or entertained their

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and 50,000 sheep. Tavernier speaks of 100,000 victims offered by the king of Tonquin."—*Spk.Com.*

b 1 Ki. viii. 8.

"It is among the evils, and perhaps not the smallest, of democratical governments, that the people must feel before they will see. When this happens, they are roused to action. Hence it is that those kinds of government are so slow." — *Washington.*

"Arouse thee, youth!—it is no human call, — God's Church is leagur'd — haste to man the wall; haste where the red-cross banners wave on high,—signal of honour'd death or victory!" — *James Duff.*

the singers and musicians

a 1 Chr. xxiii. 6—23.

b "The manner of blowing the trumpets was, first, by a long, plain blast, then by one with breakings and quaverings, and then by a long, plain blast again." — *Jamieson.*

c 1 Ki. viii. 10, 11.

d C. Simeon, M.A. *v.* 13. *W. J. E. Bennett*, 283. *vv.* 13, 14. *N. Brady*, ii. 191; *R. Walker*, iv. 189; *Bp. Dehon*, i. 268.

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"Those who love music are gentle and honest in their tempers. I always loved music, and would not, for a great matter, be without the little skill which I possess in the art."—*Luther.*

friends. When Solomon brought up the ark of the Lord from the city of David, and placed it between the cherubim in the most holy place the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and Jeduthun, and their brethren, who conducted the songs in the temple, stood at the east end of the altar, arrayed in vestures of fine linen, the chosen emblem of purity and joy. The few faithful witnesses that remained in Sardis, and had not defiled their garments, were promised the distinguishing honour of walking with their Saviour in white. And to encourage them in their steadfast adherence to the cause of God and truth, it is added, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." On the mount of transfiguration, the raiment of Christ became white as the light; and in the same garb of joy and gladness the angels appear at His resurrection.[c]

[c] *Paxton.*

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CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Solomon blesses the people

1—6. (1) **then said Sol.,** 1 Ki. viii. 12—15.[a] **thick darkness,** some think this applies to the cloud, but more prob. the allusion is to the darkness of the chamber called the holy of holies, to wh. the cloud symbol had come. (2) **of habitation,** in which God might abide. Ancient temples were shrines for the gods, not places of assembly. (3) **turned his face,** fr. looking towards the temple. **blessed,** offered blessings to God before them, and on their behalf. (4) **with his hands,** a fig. of speech as applied to God. (5) **chose no city,** the temporary locations of the ark were chosen by God, but no *settled* place had yet been fixed. (6) **have chosen,** now at last.

Israel's king and capital (*v.* 5).—I. They were both chosen of God, the one to keep before the mind of the people the heavenly city, and the other to be a pledge of the future King that should reign in Zion. II. They are both significant to us: by them we are reminded of that King of saints who is the head of His Church, and of that glorious city, the gates of which are never closed.

The habit of public worship.—The question is often asked how shall we get our working-classes to attend public worship. The answer may be supplied by an incident of my boyhood. On the mantelshelf of my grandmother's best parlour, among other marvels, was an apple in a phial. It quite filled up the body of the bottle, and my wondering inquiry was, "How could it have been got into its place?" By stealth I climbed a chair to see if the bottom would unscrew, or if there had been a join in the glass throughout the length of the phial. I was satisfied by careful observation that neither of these theories could be supported, and the apple remained to me an enigma and a mystery. But as it was said of that other wonder, the source of the Nile—

"Nature well known no mystery remains,"—

so was it here. Walking in the garden I saw a phial placed on a tree bearing within it a tiny apple, which was growing within the crystal. Now I saw it all; the apple was put into the bottle while it was little, and it grew there. Just so must we catch the little men and women who swarm our streets—we call them

[a] "It was at this moment that Sol. himself first took his part in the dedication. Up to this point he had been seated on the brazen scaffold, his eyes fixed on the temple. But now that he heard the announcement that the sign of Div. favour had been perceived, he rose from his place, and broke into a song, or psalm, of which two versions are preserved."—*Stanley.*

v. 2. *W. J. E. Bennett, On Com. Prayer,* 240.

"Do not allow idle to deceive you; for, while you give him to-day, he steals to-morrow from you.'—*Crowquill.*

The law reveals sin but it cannot subdue it.

"Men's thoughts are much according to their inclination."—*Bacon.*

boys and girls—and introduce them within the influence of the Church, for, alas! it is hard indeed to reach them when they have ripened in carelessness and sin.[b]

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[b] *C. H. Spurgeon.*

7—11. (7) **in the heart,** 2 Sa. vii. 2; 1 Chr. xxviii. 2. (8) **didst well,** even good purposes are commended of God. (9) **thou shalt not,** bec. his reign had been so full of wars, (10) **performed his word,** the fulfilment being plain to all the people. (11) **have I put,** the priests had done it for him.

God's acceptance of David's good desires (*vv.* 7, 8).—In this incident, as related in our text, we notice—I. The characteristic marks of true piety. 1. Its aims are high; 2. Its efforts earnest; 3. Its desires unbounded. Whosoever possesses such piety in his heart, shall assuredly be honoured with—II. God's approbation and acceptance of it. 1. Without the heart, no services that we can render to the Lord are pleasing to Him; 2. But where the heart is, even the smallest services are pleasing in His sight. Application:—(1) Let the advancement of the Church be dear to us; (2) Let us, in all we do, be particularly attentive to pour out our hearts; (3) Let us be contented with doing what we can for God, though we should not succeed according to our wishes.

Wishing and willing.—To wish and to will are very different things. There are a thousand men who wish, where there is one man that wills. Wishing is but a faint state of desire. Willing is a state of the reason, and of the affections, and of the will, in activity, to secure what one desires. A man may wish, and yet reject all the steps and instruments by which that wish can be carried into effect. No man wills until he has made up his mind not only to have the end, but to have all the steps intermediately by which that end is to be secured. To will a thing is to will the instruments of it. Wishing and willing are so diverse, that it would seem as though they were hardly related; but they are. It is true that the will is generated sometimes from wishing; but it is as seeds become plants, by a total change. Wishing, in its commoner form, is merely a passive state. It is susceptible of impressions. It is the faint recognition of excellence, but without a purpose or a power of doing, or being, or securing that which is liked.[b]

[b] *Beecher.*

12—17. (12) **stood,** and then knelt (*v.* 13). **spread . . hands,** the attitude of prayer.[a] (13) **brazen scaffold,** or platform, "placed east of the altar, apparently at the entrance of the outer coast." (14) **no God like thee,** Ex. xv. 11. (15) **hast kept,** *v.* 10.[b] (16) **now therefore keep,** the special word of promise. (17) **verified,** proved to be a true and faithful word.

God and His people (*vv.* 14, 15).—In this address Solomon declares the—I. Unexceptional character of God. There is no God like Him. II. In what that unexceptional character of God consists: in keeping covenant and mercy. III. Who those are to whom that character is manifested: those who walk before God with all their hearts. IV. The evidence that God has graciously given of this exceptional relation; His conduct in the past to David, and the fulfilment of His word to his house.

Greatness of God.—If philosophy is to be believed, our world is but an outlying corner of creation; bearing, perhaps, as small a proportion to the great universe as a single grain bears to all

Solomon rehearses his purpose

[a] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 8. *W. Enfield,* ii. 23.

"The will without the deed is better than the deed without the will. A person who is charitably disposed, for instance, but who lacks pecuniary ability, may confer a greater benefit, by means of sincere prayers and good wishes, than he could possibly do by merely giving him money; and thus, the means of being charitable can never be said, in the strict sense of the word, to be wanting."—*Lee.*

Solomon's prayer at the dedication

[a] "He stretched forth his hands in the gesture of Oriental prayer, as if to receive the blessings for which he sought, and at the same time exchanged the usual standing posture of prayer for the extraordinary one of kneeling, now first mentioned in the sacred history, and only used in Eastern worship

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at the present day in moments of deep humiliation."—*Stanley.*

b Jos. xxi. 45.

v. 13. *E. Taswell, Mis Sac.* "We see that good designs and intentions are approved and commended by God, though He gives not the opportunity of putting them in execution. On the other hand, good intentions are but hypocrisy, without vigorous endeavours." —*Orton.*

c Dr. Guthrie.

a Is. lxvi. 1; Ac. vii. 49; Jno. i. 14, ii. 21.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

v 18. *J. Pierce,* 285: *Dr. A. Rees,* i. 238; *Dr. R. Gordon,* 65.

vv. 19—21. *Dr. J. Coney,* iii. 263.

No one knows what sin is fully, but the Saviour, who has borne it in our room.

"God never made His work for man to mend."—*Dryden.*

c S. Stennett.

a Illus. Jos. vii. 4, 5.

b Illus. 1 Ki. xvii. 1.

"Whoever well considers the state of the world, and human experience, cannot but conclude that God is more concerned to make men holy than happy; for many are able to rest in their sorrows,

the sands of the seashore, or one small quivering leaf to the foliage of a boundless forest. Yet, even within this earth's narrow limits, how vast the work of Providence! how soon is the mind lost in contemplating it! How great that Being whose hand paints every flower, and shapes every leaf; who forms every bud on every tree, and every infant in the darkness of the womb; who feeds even crawling worm with a parent's care, and watches like a mother over the insect that sleeps away the night in the bosom of a flower; who throws open the golden gates of day, and draws around a sleeping world the dusky curtains of the night; who measures out the drops of every shower, the whirling snowflakes, and the sands of man's eventful life; who determines alike the fall of a sparrow and the fate of a kingdom, and so overrules the tide of human fortunes, that, whatever befall him, come joy or sorrow, the believer says, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good!"[c]

18—21. (18) **will God,** ch. ii. 6.[a] (19—21) **have respect,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. viii. 28—30.

Condescension of God in becoming incarnate (*v.* 18).—An inconceivable act of condescension, as it respects His symbolic presence in a temple of stone: but infinitely more so as it respects His real presence in a body of flesh. To illustrate this, we shall—I. Contrast the characters of God and man. 1. The majesty of God and the meanness of man; 2. The purity of God and the sinfulness of man. Having thus prepared the way, we will—II. Give an answer to the question proposed in the text. He not only will, He has dwelt with man on the earth. 1. Symbolically; 2. Personally; 3. Mystically. Application:—(1) Marvel at our own ingratitude; (2) Seek to dwell with Him in heaven.

The greatness of God.—Will He, indeed, whom the heaven of heavens will not contain, take up His abode with men? What heart among us but glows with gratitude and love at these joyful tidings! Let us, at the head of our several families, in a transport of devout affection, welcome this kind and generous Guest into our houses. Let us give Him the entertainment He demands, even that of cordial love and obedience. Let us present Him the sacrifices He requires, even those of daily prayer and praise. And let us tremble at the thought of so demeaning ourselves in the habitations He has thus honoured, as ever to provoke Him to depart thence.[c]

22—27. (22) **an oath he laid,** Le. v. 1. (23) **requiting,** returning an equivalent. (24) **to the worse,** in battle.[a] **in this house,** looking towards it. (25) **bring them again,** this expression seems anticipative of the times of captivity. (26) **shut up,** fig. for time of drought.[b] (27) **hast taught them,** by the affliction, all trouble brought on God's people being corrective and disciplinary.

National reverses (*vv.* 24, 25).—I. We have here the causes of national reverses stated: "Because they have sinned against Thee." II. We have the suggestion that people are not to assume on any past relations or success. III. We have a direction for those who may suffer reverses. They are to confess their sin and pray for pardon. IV. There is an encouragement offered to such as do thus repent. Learn:—This applies also to personal as well as to public reverses.

The patience of God.—Suppose a man should come into a curious artificer's shop, and there, with one blow, dash in pieces such a piece of art that had cost many years' study and pains in the contriving thereof, how could he bear with it, how would he take on to see the workmanship of his hands so rashly, so wilfully destroyed? He could not but take it ill, and be much troubled thereat. Thus it is, that as soon as God had set up and perfected the frame of the world, sin gave a subtile shake to all, it unpinned the frame, and had like to have pulled all in pieces again; nay, had it not been for the promise of Christ, all this goodly frame had been reduced to its primitive nothing again. Man by his sin had pulled down all about his ears, but God in mercy keeps it up; man by sin provokes God, but God in mercy passeth by all affronts whatsoever. Oh, the wonderful mercy! Oh, the omnipotent patience of God![c]

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for the sake of their use and end, but no one finds rest in unholy delights. In sinful pleasure God follows man with a scourge; in sorrow, with balm."—*J. Pulsford.*

c Spencer.

28—31. (28) **dearth,** scarcity, fr. other causes than lack of rain. **pestilence,** wh. frequently sweeps over Eastern lands. **blasting,** *etc.*, various forms of peril for growing crops. (29) **his own sore,** much more expressively put in 1 Ki. viii. 38. *plague of his own heart.* (30) **thou only,** *etc.*, therefore God deals with us in perfect righteousness.[a] (31) **fear thee,** Godly fear is in O. T. presented as the foundation of true piety. Love takes it place, and includes it, in the N. T.

The lessons of the pestilence (*vv.* 28—31).—I. Our text supplies us with a rebuke of mere rationalism. There is a God of Providence behind all natural causes. Men often look after the natural cause, and forget God. II. Our text shows us the spirit and way in which the plague, pestilence, and famine are to be met. Scientific and sanitary measures are not forbidden, but prayer is encouragingly enforced. III. Our text also shows us that calamities that proceed from so-called natural causes should lead to repentance and reconsecration to God.

Destructive insects.—We are so little acquainted with the various species of destructive insects that ravage the Eastern countries, that it may be thought extremely difficult to determine what kind was meant by Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, by the word *chasel*, which our version renders *caterpillars*, and which is distinguished by him there from the locusts, which genus is so remarkable for eating up almost every green thing; but a passage of Sir John Chardin may probably illustrate that part of Solomon's address to Him whom he considered as the God of universal nature. The causes of famine, reckoned up here, are want of rain, blasting, mildew, locusts, and caterpillars, according to our translation: with which may be compared the following passage of Chardin, in the second tome of his *Travels:* "Persia is subject to have its harvest spoiled by hail, by drought, or by insects, either locusts, or small insects, which they call *sim.* which are small white lice, which fix themselves on the foot of the stalk of corn, gnaw it, and make it die. It is rare for a year to be exempt from one or the other of these scourges, which affect the ploughed land and the gardens," etc. The enumeration by Solomon, and that of this modern writer, though not exactly alike, yet so nearly resemble each other, that one would be inclined to believe these small insects are what Solomon meant by the word translated caterpillars in our English version.[b]

a 1 Chr. xxviii. 9. *v.* 30. *J. N. Scott*, ii. 113.

"Nothing surely can be better adapted to turn man's thoughts off his own self-sufficiency than the works of nature. Wherever he rests his attention, whether on matter organised or unorganised, there he will discover convincing evidence of his own ignorance; and at the same time the omnipotence of a first great Cause will be impressed on his mind, and influence his understanding."—*Maund.*

"Nature was before science. Science comes out of nature. There would never have been any of the sciences in minds, books, etc., if they had not previously existed in nature. Man's mind is not the cause, but the occasion or medium through which science flows from nature into the intellectual world."—*John Bate.*

b Harmer.

B.C. 1004, *etc.*

vv. 34, 35. *Dr. H. Sacheverell, A. Fast Ser.* 1706.

Count Godamar, a foreigner of note, often professed, in the declining part of his years, when death and the eternal world seemed near, "that he feared nothing in the world more than sin; and that whatever liberties he had formerly taken, he would rather now submit to be torn to pieces by wild beasts than knowingly or willingly commit any sin against God."

"Happy the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that chequer life."—*Cowper.*

32—35. (32) **stranger,** many such came to reside in the country, for trading purposes, during Sol.'s reign. This prayer indicates a growing liberality of religious sentiment. (33) **that .. name,** Israel was to witness for Jehovah to the whole world. (34) **way .. them.** only in the way of obedience could Divine blessings be expected, or sought. (35) **cause,** or right.

The stranger in the house of God (*vv.* 32, 33).—I. Strangers often visit the house of God, impelled thereto by a variety of circumstances. II. Their visits should be expected, and provision made for their comfort. III. Their coming should be met by a hearty welcome from all the people of God. IV. Prayer should be made that the stranger may hear words whereby he may be saved. V. It is reasonably expected of the stranger that he will return to his land and kindred, and spread the praises of God.

The influence of worship.—A Thug at Meirut, who had been guilty of many murders, was arrested, and cast, heavily ironed, into prison. There a missionary visited him, and preached Christ to him with such success that he professed conversion. As he was brought before the judge, and confronted by many witnesses, he said, pointing to them, "No need of these: I am ready to avow the crimes of my dreadful life." He then proceeded to declare, that, having been brought up among the Thugs, he fully believed that, by the shedding of the blood of each victim, he had not only pleased the dreadful goddess Kali, but procured her favour for himself. And he recounted murder after murder in which he had been engaged, some of them attended with such cruelty that those present who had begun to feel some pity for him again shrunk back; the judge himself lifting up his hands and exclaiming, "How could you be guilty of enormities like these?" The only reply the poor man made to the judge was to place his hand in the bosom of his linen vest to take forth a little book; then, holding it up in his hand, he said, "Had I but received this book sooner, the book of Jesus, my Saviour and my God, I should not have done it."

36—42. (36) **no man,** *etc.*, so their sinning might be regarded as a certainty.[a] (37) **bethink themselves,** Heb. bring back to their heart. (38) **all their heart,** God can only accept a return thus sincere and whole-hearted. (39) **forgive,** that being their great request. (40) **now my God,** comp. the conclusion of the prayer in the Bk. of Kings. **attent,** or attentive, ready to listen. (41) **resting place,**[b] on the native rock under the wings of the cherubim, the symbol of God's presence was placed. (42) **turn not away,** in shame at unanswered prayers. **mercies of David,** shown to David.

Dedication of the temple (*v.* 41).—We will show—I. What Solomon desired as the crown of all his labours. 1. The special presence of the Deity in the temple, as His fixed abode; 2. An abundant effusion of His promised blessings on all who should frequent it. II. What infinitely richer blessings we may expect under our more perfect dispensation. The temple a shadow of good things to come. Application:—(1) Let us consecrate our souls to God, as His temple; (2) Let us plead with Him His great and precious promises.[c]

Worship.—

"Oh, brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;

a Pr. xx. 9; Ecc. vii. 20; Jas. iii. 2; 1 Jno. i. 8.

b Comp. Psalm cxxxii. 9.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 39, 40. *Dr. T. Jackson, Wks.* vi. 5.

v. 40. *Bp. Wilson,* iv. 289.

"The law of nature is the will of God relating to human actions, grounded in the moral differences of things. Some understand it in a more comprehensive sense, as signifying those stated orders by which all the parts of the ma-

To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was "doing good;"
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangour
Of wild war-music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace![d]

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terial world are governed in their several motions and operations."—*C. Buck.*

"Immediate are the acts of God, more swift than time or motion."—*Milton.*

d Whittier.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

the sacrifices consumed, the glory of God fills the temple

1—7. (1) **the fire,** the sign of God's acceptance of Sol.'s sacrifices.[a] **the glory,** as ch. v. 13, 14. (2) **into the house,** prob. the first house, wh. as well as the holy of holies was filled with the glory-cloud. (3) **bowed themselves,** attitude of extreme adoration and reverence.[b] (4) **and all the people,**[c] they did not offer them on the altar, but gave them for sacrifice, (5) **sacrifice,** *etc.*, the number is enormous, and difficult for us to realise. (6) **waited . . offices,** "stood in their stations," to receive, and kill, etc., the sacrifices. **David . . made,** 1 Chr. xv. 16. (17) **middle of the court,** *i.e.* the outer court, bec. there was not space enough in the proper priests' court.

a Le. ix. 24; Ju. vi. 21, xiii. 20; 1 Ki. xviii. 38.

b Le. ix. 24.

c Comp. 1 Ki. viii. 62—66.

The house filled with the glory God (*v.* 1).—I. The impressive scene that the text brings before us. II. The things now present, of which those things were a shadow in the past. 1. The fire of the Holy Spirit comes down to consume sin, to apply the word, to convert the soul; 2. The great sacrifice for sin has been offered once for all; 3. The glory of the Lord fills the earthly courts of His house this day when sinners are converted—when saints rejoice in Him—when His people show forth the praises of Him who has called them to a new life in that new life of which He is the model and the source.

No likeness of God.—One day when Mr. Richards, missionary in India, was conversing with the natives, a fakir came up, and put into his hand a small stone, about the size of a sixpence, with the impression of two human likenesses sculptured on the surface: he also proffered a few grains of rice, and said, "This is Mahadeo!" Mr. Richards said. "Do you know the meaning of 'Mahadeo'?" The fakir replied, "No." Mr. Richards proceeded, "'Mahadeo' means the great God,—he who is God of gods, and besides whom there can be no other. Now, this great God is a spirit. No one can see a spirit, who is intangible. Whence, then, this visible impression on a senseless, hard, immovable stone? To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? God is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. He hath said, I am Jehovah: there is no God beside Me!" The poor fakir was serious, respectful, and attentive, continually exclaiming, "Your words are true."

"With God there is no free man but His servant, though in the galleys; no slave but the sinner, though in a palace; none noble but the virtuous, if never so basely descended; none rich but he that possesseth God, even in rags; none wise but he that is a fool to himself and the world: none happy but he whom the world pities. Let me be free, noble, rich, wise, happy, to God."—*Up. Hall.*

the solemn assemblage and banquet

8—11. (8) **feast,** the first seven days was the feast of tabernacles, the second seven the feast of the dedication. **entering . . Hamath,** northern boundary of Palestine.[a] **river of Egypt,**

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Jos. xiii. 3. (9) **solemn assembly,** special closing day. (10) **three and twentieth,** the day following the completion of the double feast. (11) **all . . effected,** some things beyond the plan given him by David, planned by Sol. himself.

National gladness (*v.* 10).—I. A spectacle is here presented of national rejoicing. and we may well first inquire into the causes of this universal joy. They were glad and merry in heart for the goodness, etc. II. We may speculate on what was the natural outcome of this gladness of heart. They returned to their homes in this grateful state of mind not to hide their joy but to publish God's goodness, and live out the joy of their hearts in a holy consecrated life.

Christian joy.— His is a modest humble exultation, a serious, severe joy ; suitable to his solid stable hope. His spirit is not puffed up and swollen with air, it is not big by an inflation, or a light and windy tumour ; but it is really filled with effectual preapprehensions of a weighty glory. Hisjoy accordingly exerts itself with a steady, lively vigour equally removed from vain lightness and stupidity, from conceitedness and insensibleness of his blessed state. He forgets not that he is less than the least of God's mercies, but disowns not his title to the greatest of them. He abases himself to the dust in the sense of his own vileness ; but in the admiration of Divine grace, he rises as high as heaven. In his humiliation he affects to equal himself with worms, in his joy and praise with angels.[b]

12—18. (15) **appeared,** *etc.*, as at Gibeon.[a] (13) **if,** *etc.*, the response recalls the chief points of Sol.'s prayer. (14) **humble themselves,** God can only accept such as thus in heart return to Him. (15) **attent,** ch. vi. 40. (16) **and sanctified it,** by making the symbol of Div. presence rest in it. (17) **walk before me,** this condition Sol. failed to meet. Though David grievously sinned, he kept his integrity of heart. (18) **there shall not,** *etc.*, ch. vi. 16.

Biblical anthropomorphism.—Human organs. The eyes and ears of God (*v.* 15). This language is used for two purposes. I. To express His cognisance of man. He knows us—1. Directly ; 2. Thoroughly. II. To express His interest in man. 1. In the various capacities of enjoyment with which He has endowed us, and the provisions He made for them ; 2. In the preservation of our existence, notwithstanding our sinfulness ; 3. In our redemption by Jesus Christ. Conclusion :—Thou God seest me, we unite with the blessed fact, "Thou God lovest me."[b]

The locust.—A term used by the sacred writers to signify the locust, is *hagab*, which our translators render sometimes locust and sometimes grasshopper. They translate it locust in the following passage : "If I shut up heaven that there be no more rain, or if I command the locusts (*hagab*) to devour the land, or if I send a pestilence among My people : if My people shall humble themselves and pray unto Me, and seek My face, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land." We cannot reasonably doubt that the word, in this place, denotes the locust, for this declaration was made in answer to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, that if the heaven should be shut up, and there should be no more rain ; or if there should be famine, pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or caterpillar, then God would hear them when they spread forth

a Nu. xxxiv. 8; Jos. xiii. 5.

"What throbbings of deep joy pulsate through all I see; from the full bud whose unctuous sheath is glittering in the moon, up through the system of created things, even to the flaming ranks of seraphim!"—*Alford.*

"How much better it is to weep at joy, than joy at weeping."—*Shakespeare.*

b J. Howe.

God promises the king that his prayer shall be answered

a 1 Ki. iii. 5, ix. 2.

b Homilist.

vv. 13, 14. *Bp. Reynolds, v.* 271.

v. 14. *H. Marriot*, ii. 34.

v. 15. *Bp. Wilson*, iv. 289; *J. W. Warter*, ii. 85; *C. Simeon*, iv. 79.

"In nature, all is managed with perfect frugality and just reserve, profuse to none, but bountiful to all; never employing on one thing more than enough, but with exact economy retrenching the superfluous, and adding force to what is principal in everything."—*Shaftesbury.*

"Nature is the most thrifty

B.C. 1004.

their hands towards that holy place. It must also be remembered that the grasshopper is an inoffensive animal, or noxious in a very slight degree, and therefore by no means a proper subject for deprecation in the temple. This circumstance also shows that the Hebrew term here does not mean the cicada, as some writers have supposed; for though the noise which they make is extremely disagreeable and disturbing, as Chandler complains, it is not an insect so distressing to the Orientals as to admit the idea that it was a subject of solemn prayer at the dedication. To disturb the slumbers of the weary traveller or the toilworn peasant, and to devour the fruits of the earth and plunge the inhabitants of a country into all the horrors of famine, are evils of a very different magnitude.[c]

19—22. (19) **serve other gods,** this was the greatest sin an Israelite could commit. (20) **them up,** *i.e.* the people who follow the lead of such a king. (21) **is high,** or *shall be high,* high now in glory, it shall then be high in shame. **astonishment,** bec. of its ruin.[a] (22) **all this evil,** comp. the wailing of Ezekiel over the desolations that actually overtook the city and temple.

The solution of a great historical problem (*v.* 22).—I. The problem is this:—The Jews were anciently the favoured people of a God of infinite faithfulness, whose love is an unchanging love, and we find them this day a by-word and a proverb. How is this to be explained? II. The answer is to be found in the events of their history, and especially in their rejection of the Son of God. Therefore hath He brought all this evil upon them.

Retribution.—The late Rev. John Campbell relates the following occurrence, which took place when sailing to London in a Leith trader, many years ago: "I remember once," says he, "about two in the morning, an alarming occurrence taking place by a young gentleman, in his sleep, rushing from his bed to the middle of the cabin, and, pointing to the floor, calling out with a loud voice, 'There's the blood! there's the blood! yes, there's the blood!' on which some of us rose, and found he was asleep, and awoke him and got him back to his bed. In the morning, we requested a sprightly young gentleman, whom we observed had got intimate with him after their meeting on board, to see if he could find out the cause of his thus dreaming. In the evening, he told us that the gentleman who had so disturbed us in the night-time was an officer in the army, and on his way to join his regiment in Sicily; that some time ago he had shot a brother officer in a duel, and that ever since he had been disturbed in his sleep in the night-time, and appeared downcast even when perfectly awake. He said it was his custom every night to fasten his leg to the bed-post, or to anything to which he could tie it, to prevent his getting out of bed; 'but I found,' said he, 'nothing of the kind in these ship beds.' What a striking resemblance was the state of this young murderer's mind to that of the first murderer, Cain, who immediately became a coward, afraid to move from his accustomed home, lest every stranger he met should endeavour to slay him!"

thing in the world; she never wastes anything; she undergoes change, but there's no annihilation—the essence remains—matter is eternal."—*Binney.*

c *Paxton.*

God declares the consequences of apostasy

a "The sense is, as to this house, wh. was once lofty and admired, even the casual passers by, who once gazed at it in wonder, shall be astonished at its desolation."—*Wordsworth.*

"When it is intended by a line of rails to conduct a train off the main trunk and turn it aside to another direction, the branch line at first runs parallel with the trunk. It goes alongside for a space in the same direction, but when it has thus got fairly off, then it turns more rapidly round, and bounds away at right angles to its proper course. As engineers avoid the physical, so the tempter avoids the moral difficulty; an abrupt turn is not attempted in either case."—*Rev. W. Arnot.*

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CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Tadmor, etc., are built

a 1 Ki. vi. 37, 38, vii. 1, ix. 10.

b "Prob. a town of Zobah, otherwise unknown, wh. revolted fr. Sol., and was reduced to subjection."—*Spk. Com.*

c Some identify with Hazezon-Tamar, or Engedi.

d "Some of these fortified places may have been necessary to keep in check the Canaanitish population, who were likely to fret under the forced labour wh. he exacted from them."—*Tuck.*

1—6. (1) **twenty years,** date fr. fourth year of Sol.'s reign; add seven years for building temple, and thirteen for building Sol.'s own palace.[a] (2) **cities,** comp. 1 Ki. ix. 11—13. (3) **Hamath-zobah,**[b] 1 Chr. xviii. 3, 9. (4) **Tadmor,**[c] 1 Ki. ix. 18. **in Hamath,** the "Cœle-Syria of the Gks. and Roms." (5) **built,** *i.e.* repaired or fortified. **Beth-horon,** at entrance of dangerous and narrow passes. (6) **Baalath,** comp. 1 Ki. ix. 18, 19.[d]

Colonisation (*v.* 4).—I. Colonisation a natural result of national prosperity. Science, commerce, and an increased population lead inevitably to this. II. Colonisation promoted merely for the sake of material ends, conducive to national glory or to its true wealth. Where are the great colonies built by old Rome? Nothing remains but their name, and a few ruins of their chief buildings. III. Colonisation should be in the interests of humanity; and they will be so in proportion as the truth is planted and the glory of God is upheld.

Commerce.—

> Commerce brought into the public walk
> The busy merchant; the big warehouse built;
> Raised the strong crane; choked up the loaded street
> With foreign plenty; and thy stream O Thames!
> Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods!
> Chose for his grand resort on either hand.
> Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
> Shot up their spires; the bellying street between
> Possess'd the breezy void; the sooty hulk
> Steer'd sluggish on; the splendid barge along
> Row'd regular to harmony; around,
> The boat light skimming, stretch'd its oary wings,
> While deep the various voice of servant toil
> From bank to bank increased, whence ribb'd with oak,
> To bear the British thunder black and bold,
> The roaring vessel rush'd into the main.[e]

Solomon marries the princess of Egypt

a Comp. 1 Ki. ix. 20—23.

b This appears to have been also one reason for Sol.'s building a new palace, David's was henceforth regarded as sacred. "Sol.'s own palace was erected considerably below the level of the temple mount, on the south-west, and

7—11. (7) **left,**[a] descendants of the people in the land at the time of the invasion. (8) **consumed not,** failed to extirpate. **pay tribute,** of service rather than of money. (9) **men of war,** *etc.*, occupying honourable offices of all kinds. Obs. how this increased class, or caste, distinctions. (10) **two hundred,** *etc.*, in Kings the number is *five hundred, etc.* (11) **daughter of Phar.,** 1 Ki. iii. 1, vii. 8. **not dwell,** permanently abide. **holy,** regarded as sanctified by the presence of the ark.[b]

A politic marriage (*v.* 11).—I. No doubt this marriage was brought about by Solomon's desire to strengthen himself by foreign alliances. It would have been better for him to have looked to the bonds that bound his throne to God. Many marriages are made from worldly motives. II. It was the source of immediate perplexity. Solomon felt that it would be incongruous to introduce his wife to scenes that were associated with a religion that she did not recognise. Diversities of religious

sentiment often a sou of domestic perplexity. III. Since the marriages of prince re fraught with such great effects, people may be expecte to take an interest in the matrimonial contracts of their rulers.

Marriage brokers. — In Genoa there are marriage brokers, who have pocket-books filled with the names of the marriageable girls of the different classes, with notes of their figures, personal attractions, fortunes, etc. These brokers go about endeavouring to arrange connections ; and when they succeed, they get a commission of two or three per cent. upon the portion. Marriage in Genoa is quite a matter of calculation, generally settled by the parents or relations, who often draw up the contract before the parties have seen one another; and it is only when everything else is arranged, and a few days previous to the marriage ceremony, that the future husband is introduced to his intended partner for life. Should he find fault with her manners or appearance, he may break off the match, on condition of defraying the brokerage, and any other expenses incurred.[c]

12—18. (12) **Sol. offered,** not in person, but through the priests. Reference is to the appointment of regular service in the temple.[a] **altar,** ch. iv. 1. (13) **commandment of Moses,** Ex. xxiii. 14, xxix. 38. (14) **order of David,** 1 Chr. xxiv. 1—5. **porters,** 1 Chr. ix. 17, xxvi. 1—19. **man of God,** term only applied to Moses, and one nameless prophet, besides David[b] in the Bks. of Chr. (15) **king,** *i.e.* David. **treasures,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 20—28. (16) **prepared,** idea is, made ready for use, so meaning *completed.* (17) **Ezion-geber,** the *giant's backbone,* Nu. xxxiii. 35, 36.[c] **Eloth,** or *Elath,* De ii. 8 ; 2 Sa. viii. 14. (18) **ships,** *etc.,* bec. the Israelites had no knowledge of ship-building or navigation.

The advantages of commerce.—I am wonderfully delighted to see a body of men thriving in their own fortunes, and at the same time promoting the public stock ; or, in other words, raising estates for their own families, by bringing into their country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous. Nature seems to have taken a particular care to disseminate her blessings among the different regions of the world, with an eye to their mutual intercourse and traffic among mankind, that the nations of the several parts of the globe might have a kind of dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common interest.[d]

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quite apart fr. the castle of David."—*Tuck.*

"He that made the first marriage in paradise, bestows His first miracle upon a Galilean marriage. He that was the Author of matrimony and sanctifieth it, doth, by His holy presence, honour the resemblance of His eternal union with His Church." — *Bp. Hall.*

c Percy Anec.

Solomon's gold, fleet, etc.

a 1 Ki. ix. 25.

b 1 Chr. xxiii. 14; 2 Chr. xxv. 7, 9.

c De. ii. 8; 1 Ki. ix. 26.

"A mercantile democracy may govern long and widely; a mercantile aristocracy cannot stand."—*Landor.*

"The increase of a great number of citizens in prosperity is a necessary element to the security, and even to the existence, of a civilised people."—*Burke.*

d Addison.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—6. (1) **Sheba,** prob. Saba, the chief city of Yemen, the leading province of Arabia.[a] **prove,** test his reputed wisdom. (2) **all her questions,** she was quite unable to puzzle him. (3) **the wisdom,** or the proofs of his wisdom. (4) **his ascent,** orig. *alliyyah,* the word used for upper chamber.[b] Whether this was a private entrance fr. the palace to the temple, or the viaduct crossing the Tyropœan,[c] cannot be decided. (5) **acts,** marg. *sayings.* (6) **mine eyes,** they saw the grandeur of his kingdom, but her ears heard the proofs of his wisdom.

The judgment of Solomon.—An ingenious device is attributed in the Talmud to King Solomon. The Queen of Sheba, attracted

the queen of Sheba

a Kalisch.

1 Ki. x. 1.

b 1 Ki. xvii. 19.

c Ayre.

Josephus, Sept., Vulg., and Syr. translate, "the sacrifices wh. he offered at the

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house of the Lord."

v. 1. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 301.

"Justice is the first virtue of those who command, and stops the complaints of those who obey."—*Did rot.*

by the reputation of his wisdom, one day presented herself before him, holding in her hands two wreaths,—the one of exquisite natural flowers, the other of artificial. The artificial wreath was arranged with so much taste and skill, the delicate form of the flowers so perfectly imitated, and the minutest shades of colour so wonderfully blended, that the wise king, at the distance at which they were held, was unable to determine which was really the work of the Divine Artist. For a moment he seemed baffled. The Jewish court looked on in melancholy astonishment. Then his eyes turned towards a window near which a swarm of bees were hovering. He commanded it to be opened. It was opened. The bees rushed into the court, and immediately alighted on one of the wreaths; whilst not a single one fixed on the other.

the queen pronounces Solomon happy

7—12. (7) **happy,** or blessed. (8) **Lord thy God,** the queen does not claim Him as her God. (9) **such spice,**[a] the district fr. wh. she came being famous for its spices. (10) **algum trees,** sandal-wood. (11) **terraces,** marg. *stairs, steps.* **psalteries,** 1 Sa. x. 5. (12) **gave . . desire,**[b] exchanging presents; and adding to his own chosen gifts things which the queen admired and wished for.

a Josephus says that the genuine balsam, which grew near Jericho and at Engedi, was introduced into Palestine by the Queen of Sheba.

b Comp. expression 1 Ki. x. 13.

Demand for commerce.—The Almighty has given to one land the fruits of Ceres, and to another mineral wealth; to the tropical regions the sugar-cane and the coffee-tree, to Italy the silkworm and the vine, to China the tea-plant, and the frozen north its huge cetaceans and costly furs, that all the nations of the earth might be united by the bonds of commerce, and the intellectual powers of man roused to exertion by the stimulus of want and the love of gain.[c]

c Hartwig.

the wealth of Solomon

13—18. (13) **weight,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. x. 14. (14) **chapmen,**[a] one who buys or sells; prob. smaller, or retail merchants are meant. **kings of Arabia,** the desert districts south of Sol.'s country.[b] (15) **targets,** a smaller kind of shield. These were made for ornamentation, as the faces could be moulded and carved with elaborate designs. (16) **house of the forest,** 1 Ki. x. 17. (17) **of ivory,** not all solid ivory, some parts veneered with it. (18) **footstool,**[c] necessary bec. the throne was raised. This is not mentioned in Bk. of Kgs. **stays,** or arms. (19) **lions,** large carved figures: as the royal animal, the lion was properly associated with a king's throne.

a A.S., *ceapman*, from *ceapan*, to buy.

b 1 Ki. x. 15.

The incessancy of labour.—The more we accomplish, the more we have to accomplish. All things are full of labour: and therefore, the more we acquire, the more care and the more toil to secure our acquisitions. Good men can never retire from their works of benevolence: their fortune is never made. I never heard of an apostle, prophet or public benefactor, retiring from their respective fields of labour. Moses, and Paul, and Peter, died with their harness on. So did Luther, and Calvin, and Wesley, and a thousand others as deserving, though not so well known to fame. We are inured to labour. It was first a duty; it is now a pleasure. Still there is such a thing as overworking man and beast, mind and body. The mainspring of a watch needs repose, and is the better for it. The muscles of an elephant, and the wings of a swift bird, are at length fatigued. Heaven gives rest to the earth because it needs it; and winter is more pregnant with blessings to the soil than summer with its flowers and

c "Xerxes is said to have witnessed the naval fight at Salamis sitting on a golden stool. Elsewhere he is described as sitting on an ivory stool, a present from Arabia."—*Von Lennep.*

"Prosperity is the touchstone of virtue; for it is less difficult to bear misfortunes than to remain uncorrupted by pleasure."—*Tacitus.*

fruits. But in the war for truth and against error there is no discharge.[d]

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d A. Campbell.

20—24. (20) **anything accounted of,** bec. of its abundance; scarcity is a condition of value. Rarity, durability, and fashion decide the value of things. (21) **Tharshish,**[a] prob. Tartessus in Spain, but this was on the Mediterranean. **peacocks,**[b] Heb. *thukyim:* these, it is thought, must have come fr. India. (22) **passed,** out-rivalled. (23) **all the kings,** extravagant expression, the reference is to tributary and friendly neighbouring sovereigns. (24) **rate year by year,** *i.e.* tribute regularly levied, and paid in kind.

Presents of raiment (*v.* 24).—Presents of vestments, on the other hand, are frequently made in these countries to the great, and those that are in public stations; and they expect them. Thevenot tells us it was a custom in Egypt, in his time, for the consuls of the European nations to send the bashaw a present of so many vests, and so many besides to some officers, both when a new bashaw came, or a new consul entered his office, as were rated at above a thousand piasters. Does not this last account remind us of the presents that were made to Solomon by the neighbouring princes, at set time, part of which, we are expressly told, consisted of raiment? 2 Chron. ix. 24. This may be thought not very well to agree with a remark of Sir J. Chardin, mentioned under a former observation, "that vestments are not presented by inferiors to superiors; or even by an equal to an equal;" but there is really no inconsistency; vestments are not the things that are chosen by those that would make a present to the great, in common; but they may be ordered to be sent as a sort of tribute, or a due which the superior claims.

the end of the reign of Solomon

a "Large trading vessels appear to have been designated *ships of Tharshish.*"—*Ayre.*

b 1 Ki. x. 22.

"Greatness stands upon a precipice, and if prosperity carries a man ever so little beyond his poise, it overbears and dashes him to pieces."—*Seneca.*

"There is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the fingers." — *Seneca.*

"We like the gift when we the giver prize." — *Ovid.*

25—31. (25) **stalls,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. iv. 26. **horses and chariots,** shd. be *horses for chariots.* **chariot cities,** 1 Ki. x. 26. (26) **the river,**[a] Ge. xv. 18, the Euphrates. (27) **as stones,** strong fig. for abundance, and comparative worthlessness. (28) **all lands,** such as Arabia and Armenia, wh. were famous for their breeds of horses.[b] (29) **Nathan,** 2 Sa. vii. 1—17. **Ahijah,** 1 Ki. xi. 11—13, 29—39. **Iddo,**[c] 2 Chr. xii. 15, xiii. 22. (30) **forty years,** comp. reigns of Saul and David. (31) **his son,** fr. all that appears his *only* son.

the death of Solomon

a 1 Ki. iv. 21.

b Law of Moses did not permit this multiplying of horses. De xvii. 16.

c He seems to have been the prophet of Rehoboam's reign.

Horses from Egypt.—The people of Israel were by their law forbidden to multiply horses, for which several reasons may be assigned. The land of Canaan, intersected in almost every direction by hills and mountains, was less adapted to the rearing of horses than other parts of Syria; but the principal reason might be to discourage the art of war, to which mankind in all ages have shown so strong a propensity, which is so hostile to the interests of true religion, of which they were the chosen depositaries, and prevent them from relying for the defence of their country, rather on the strength of their armies, which, in the East chiefly consisted of cavalry, than on the promised aid of Jehovah. This wise and salutary command, however, was often disregarded, even by the more pious kings of David's line, who imitated the princes around them in the number and excellence of their horses. Solomon set the first example of transgressing that precept, and of departing from the simplicity of his fathers: "For Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he

"If ye are fair, mankind will crowd around you, thick as when the full-faced moon sits silver in the sea, the eager waves lift up their gleaming heads, each shouldering for her smile!" — *Alexander Smith.*

"Prosperity seems to be scarcely safe unless it be

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had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem." Josephus informs us he had twenty thousand horses, which surpassed all others in beauty and swiftness. These were mounted by young men in the bloom of youth, excelling all their countrymen in stature and comeliness, with long flowing hair, habited in rich dresses of Tyrian purple, their hair powdered with gold-dust, which, by reflecting the beams of the sun, shed a dazzling splendour around their heads. It was the practice of those in the highest rank of society, in the time of Josephus, to adorn their persons in the gorgeous manner he describes; and the strong partiality which the historian cherished for his country, it is evident, induced him to transfer the extravagance of his own age to the time of Solomon.[d]

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

B.C. cir. 975.

Rehoboam made king

[a] 1 Ki. xii. 1—19.

"Human depravity flows in different channels: some are prone to one sin, and some to another." —*Scott.*

"Every man's natural disposition is his good or evil demon." —*Epicharmus.*

"Who knows what he is till he is tried, and until he meets his own trial? for every one is not discovered in the same way; we may be firm in one peril and fail in another." —*Jay.*

[b] *Beecher.*

1—5. (1) **Shechem,**[a] Ge. xii. 6. **make him king,** crown him: the acknowledgment of the people was necessary. (2) **Jeroboam,** 1 Ki. xi. 26—28, 40. (3) **they,** *i.e.* all Israel, naturally regarding him as a leader, who would represent their cause to the king. **spake,** Jeroboam being the speaker. (4) **our yoke,** the extravagances of Sol. led to heavy taxation in the later years of his reign, and throughout his reign his demand for forced labour was felt to be oppressive. **ease thou,** grant some reliefs. (5) **three days,** in such circumstances delays are dangerous. If the request was good he should have responded at once.

Ashamed of labour.—Men seem ashamed of labour; and often you will find men who have made themselves respected by labour, have built up a business and amassed a fortune, who turn to their sons, and say, "You shall never do as I did; you shall lead a different life; you shall be spared all this." Oh the rich men's sons! They aim to lead a life of emasculated idleness and laziness. Like the polyp that floats useless and nasty upon the sea, —all jelly and flabby, no muscle, no bone; it shuts and opens, and opens and shuts, and sucks in and squirts out again, of no earthly account, influence, or use.—such are these poor fools. Their parents toiled, and grew strong, built up their forms of iron and bone; but denying all this to their sons, they turn them upon the world boneless, muscleless, simple gristle, and soft as that.[b]

Rehoboam's reply to the deputation

[a] 1 Ki. xii. 11.

[b] *Dr. J. Parker.*

"There be three sorts of government, monarchical, aristocratical, democratical; and they are apt to fail three several ways into ruin: the first by tyranny; the

6—11. (6) **old men,** experienced counsellors, who knew well how heavy the burdens had been. (7) **kind,** considerate, willing to yield a little. (8) **young men,** his companions of the palace, who had no experience of government whatever. Now he was king they became his counsellors. (9) **give ye,** young people like to carry things with a high hand, and the advice these young counsellors were likely to give would accord with Rehob.'s own inclination. (10) **my little,** *etc.*, fig. expression, intimating that demands would be increased rather than diminished. (11) **scorpions,** a terrible kind of whip.[a]

Two methods of treating men.—I. The conciliatory. II. The unconciliatory. Social positions are graduated. Yet no elevation of social rank gives one man the right to tyrannise over another.

Pass in rapid review a few of the cases in which the two methods of treating men come into constant operation. The maintenance of a conciliatory policy is quite consistent with a headship. 1. Firmness; 2. Justice. What is the cure for all false relations among men? The Gospel of reconciliation.[b]

The life-duty of kindness.—The great duty of life is not to give pain; and the most acute reasoner cannot find an excuse for one who voluntarily wounds the heart of a fellow-creature. Even for their own sakes people should show kindness and regard to their dependents. They are often better served in trifles, in proportion as they are rather feared than loved; but how small is this gain compared with the loss sustained in all the weightier affairs of life! Then the faithful servant shows himself at once as a friend, while one who serves from fear shows himself as an enemy.[c]

12—15. (12) **Jeroboam,** evidently the leader of the movement. (13) **roughly,** so quite contrary to the advice of the old men, *v.* 7. (14) **young men,** as *v.* 10. (15) **of God,** overruled by God as punishment for sins of Sol., and the nation. **his word,** 1 Ki. xi. 29—31.

Domestic tyranny.—For his rule over his family, and for his conduct to wife and children, subjects over whom his power is monarchical, any one who watches the world must think with trembling of the account which many a man will have to render. For in our society there is no law to control the king of the fireside. He is master of property, happiness, life almost. He is free to punish, to make happy or unhappy, to ruin or to torture. He may kill a wife gradually, and be no more questioned than the grand seignior who drowns a slave at midnight. He may make slaves and hypocrites of his children, or friends and freemen, or drive them into revolt and enmity against the natural laws of love. I have heard politicians and coffee-house wiseacres talking over the newspaper, and railing at the tyranny of the emperor, and wondered how these, who are monarchs too in their way, govern their own dominions at home, where each man rules absolute. When the annals of each little reign are shown the Supreme Master under whom we hold sovereignty, histories will be laid bare of household tyrants cruel as Amurath, savage as Nero, and reckless and dissolute as Charles.[a]

16—19 (16) **what portion,** *etc.*, in this expression refusing to acknowledge Rehoboam as their king. **to your tents,** the cry of revolt.[a] (17) **dwelt in the cities,** and did not care to remove into the territory of the ten tribes. (18) **Hadoram,** 1 Ki. xii. 18. **to flee,** fearing for his own life. (19) **Israel,** *i.e.* the ten tribes, which fr. time of Absalom, poss. fr. Abner, had taken this name, in distinction from Judah.

Moral tyrants.—

> Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
> Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice—
> The weakness and the wickedness of luxury,
> The negligence, the apathy, the evils
> Of sensual sloth—produce ten thousand tyrants,
> Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
> The worst acts of one energetic master,
> However harsh and hard in his own bearing.[b]

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second by ambition; the last by tumults. A commonwealth grounded upon any one of these is not of long continuance; but, wisely mingled, each guards the other and makes the government exact."—*Quarles.*

c Frederika Bremer.

Jeroboam

"To trample on all human feelings all ties which bind man to man, to emulate the fiends, who will one day requite them in variety of torturing."—*Byron.*

"With common men, there needs too oft the show of war to keep the substance of sweet peace; and for a king, it is sometimes better to be feared than loved."—*Shakespeare.*

a Thackeray.

the rebellion of Israel

a 2 Sa. xx. 1, 2.

"When any one person or body of men seize into their hands the power in the last resort, there is properly no longer a government, but what Aristotle and his followers call the abuse and corruption of one."—*Swift.*

b Byron.

B.C. *cir.* 957.

Rehoboam is forbidden to make war with Israel

"The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government." — *Washington.*

"We are often governed by people not only weaker than ourselves, but even by those whom we think so." — *Lord Greville.*

Rehoboam's fenced cities

a Ju. xiii. 2, 25, xvi. 31.

"Zorah commanded an important valley,—the Wady Surah, leading up into the hills from the low country." —*Spk. Com.*

b *Thomson.*

"O how portentous is prosperity! How, comet-like, it threatens while it shines!" — *Young.*

"It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country."—*Horace.*

Israel casts off the worship of God

a "This may account for the institution of the schismatical and idolatrous priesthood by Jeroboam." — *Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—4. (1) **to fight,** endeavouring to crush the rebellion. (2) **Shemaiah,** 1 Ki. xii. 22—24. (3) **all Israel,** keeping for this section the national name. (4) **done of me,** it was the form in which Divine judgment had come upon the effeminacy and idolatry of Sol.'s later years.

Examples of patriotism.—An old man visited the army to see his two sons, and found them both wounded. Sitting between the maimed soldiers, he was asked if he regretted the sacrifice. "No!" exclaimed he, earnestly: "if I had twenty sons I would give them all to save this Union."—A minister, dressing the wounds of a soldier, found that he had been shot through the eyes and the bridge of the nose, and that his sight was entirely gone. "Poor fellow!" said he, "this is hard." "Yes, it is hard, but I would go through it again for my country," replied the sightless hero.—Mrs. Ellet, of Philadelphia, who had given two sons (Com. Ellet of the Ram Fleet, and Brig.-Gen. Ellet of the Marine Brigade) and four grandsons for the country, said, when the body of one of her grandsons was brought home. "I do not regret the gift to my country. If I had twenty sons, I would give them all, for the country must be preserved: and if I was twenty years younger, I would go myself, and fight to the last."

5—12. (5) **built,** as so often in O. T. history, meaning fortified. **defence,** the protection of his country partly on the sides towards Israelitish territory. (6) **Beth-lehem,** *etc.*, three places lying south of Jerus. (7) **Beth-zur,** now *Beetsur*, 6 m. S.W. of Tekoa. **Shoco,** or *Soco*, now *Shuweikeh*, 17 m. S.W. of Jerus. **Adullam,** Jos. xii. 15. (8) **Gath,** 1 Chr. xviii. 1. **Mareshah,** Jos. xv. 44. **Ziph,** Jos. xv. 24. (9) **Adoraim,** mod. *Dura*. S.W. of Hebron. **Lachish,** Jos. x. 3, xv. 39. **Azekah,** Jos. x. 10, 11. (10) **Zorah,** Jos. xix. 41.[a] **Aijalon,** Jos. xxi. 24. **Hebron,** Nu. xiii. 22; Ge. xxiii. 2; Jos. xiv. 15. (11) **store,** *etc.*, necessary preparations for standing a siege. (12) **shields,** *etc.*, weapons, as well as provisions.

Devotedness of the patriot.—

'Tis not indulging private inclination,
The selfish passions, that sustains the world,
And lends its rulers grace; no, it is not then
That glory springs, and high immortal deeds:
The public good, the good of others, still
Must bear fond nature down, in him who dares
Aspire to worthy rule; imperious honour
Still o'er the most distinguish'd lords it most.[b]

13—17. (13) **priests . . coasts,** those resident in cities of Israel, fearing that they might be prevented fr. attending their duties in the temple, removed their residences into Rehob.'s territory.[a] (14) **suburbs,** *see* Nu. xxxv. 1—8. **cast them off,** whether Jerob. took his action first, or when he found Jehovah's priests forsaking his land, does not clearly appear. (15) **he ordained,** in his own wilfulness. **devils,** lit. *goats;* prob. meant to be general; *vain idols.* **calves,** 1 Ki. xii. 28. (16) **after them,** the priests, etc.; there was a migration of sincere

Jehovah-worshippers out of Jeroboam's kingdom. (17) **three years**, a short time for the reformation to retain its influence.[b]

The duty of Protestants (*vv.* 13, 16).—This will lead me to set before you—I. The conduct of Protestants in that day. 1. In it they bore testimony against the reigning abominations; 2. They steadfastly adhered to the service of their God; 3. They renounced all for conscience sake. II. Our duty, as Protestants, at the present day. 1. We should realise our own religious principles; 2. We should show their superior efficacy to sanctify the heart and life. Address those—(1) Who are conforming to this world; and (2) Those who are, like the Israelites, setting their hearts fully to seek the Lord their God.[c]

Seducing others to sin.—To tempt and lead another into sin is worse than to sin thyself. It shows sin to be of great growth in that man that doth it knowingly and willingly. Herbs and flowers do not shed their seed till ripe, creatures propagate not till they are of stature and age! What do those that tempt others but diffuse their wicked opinions and practices, and as it were raise up seed to the devil, thereby to keep up the name of their infernal father in the world? This shows sin to be mighty in them indeed.[d]

18–23. (18) **Jerimoth**, not elsewhere mentioned as *son of David.*[a] **Eliab**, the eldest son of Jesse. (19, 20) **Maachah**, granddaughter of Absalom.[b] (21) **loved**, *etc.*, in Eastern harems one wife is usually regarded as the favourite. (22) **the chief**, though not the eldest of his children. He should have waited for God to point out his successor. (23) **wisely**, or prudently, skilfully, dispersing his families prevented both jealousies and plottings.[c]

Honour to a wife.—

Yes, wife, I'd be a thronèd king,
That you might share my regal seat,
That titled beauty I might bring,
And princes' homage to your feet.
How quickly, then, would nobles see
Your courtly grace, your royal mien;
Even duchesses all blind should be
To flaw or speck in you, their queen.

Poor wish! O wife, a queen you are,
To whose feet many a subject brings
A truer homage nobler far
Than bends before the thrones of kings.
You rule a realm, wife, in this heart,
Where not one rebel fancy 's seen,
Where hopes and smiles, how joyous! start
To own the sway of you, their queen.

How loyal are my thoughts by day!
How faithful is each dream of night!
Not one but lives but to obey
Your rule—to serve you, its delight;
My hours—each instant—every breath
Are, wife, as all have ever been,
Your slaves, to serve you unto death;
O wife, you are indeed a queen![d]

B.C. 957.

b 2 Chr. xii. 1, 2.

c *Rev. C. Simeon, M.A., On the Revolutions of* 1822.

"All governments are to a certain extent, a treaty with the devil."—*Jacobi.*

"Though a soldier in time of peace is like a chimney in summer, yet what wise man would pluck down his chimney because his almanac tells him it is the middle of June?"—*T. Hughes.*

d *Gurnal.*

the wives of Rehoboam

a "Poss. a son of one of David's concubines."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Her mother was Tamar."—*Josephus.*

c "By planting his sons in the fenced cities he kept those cities loyal."—*Wordsworth.*

"Christ's first public miracle graceth a marriage. It is an ancient and laudable institution, that the rites of matrimony should not want a solemn celebration. When are feasts in season, if not at the recovery of our lost rib; if not at this main change of our estate, wherein the joy of obtaining meets with the hope of further comforts?"—*Bp. Hall.*

d *W. C. Bennett.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

B.C. 972.

Invasion of Judah by Egypt

1—6. (1) **forsook the law**, as a rule of guidance. Keeping the law was the one great condition of national prosperity. (2) **Shishak**, prob. an ally of Jeroboam's; comp. 1 Ki. xiv. 25. **transgressed**, as fully detailed 1 Ki. xiv. 22—24. (3) **Lubims**, or Libyans.[a] **Sukkiims**, cave dwellers.[b] tent dwellers.[c] prob. fr. western shores of Red Sea.[d] **Ethiopians**, Heb. *Cushim*, fr. S. of Egypt. (4) **fenced cities**, ch. xi. 5—10.[e] (5) **Shemaiah**, ch. xi. 2. **therefore**, distinctly connecting the suffering with the sin. (6) **humbled themselves**, comp. John. iii. 5—9.

The court of Sheshonk.—Among the ruins of Carnac a special interest attaches to one narrow corridor, called the Court of Sheshonk. This Sheshonk—the Shishak of the Bible—was one of the last of those Pharaohs who for more than one thousand years had been busy building up the glories of Carnac. He erected a kind of chapel near the great portico, and, after the manner of his race, cut into its walls the story of his exploits. Here we see the colossal figure leading in bonds the pigmy monarchs whom he had conquered, and on a cartouche is written the name of each. One of these is peculiarly interesting to the Bible student. It was Champollion, who, in 1838, made this important discovery of Shishak dragging to the feet of the Theban Trinity the chiefs of the nations he had conquered, and identified as one of them the Rehoboam of the Bible. It is the only relic in Egypt that is directly associated with the sacred history.

7—12. (7) **some deliverance**, or temporary deliv.; God's mercy ever meets man's penitence.[a] (8) **know**, *etc.*, by comparison of the two services. Rehob. had to become tributary to Egypt. (9) **shields**, ch. ix. 15, 16. (10) **brass**, or copper; brass is a mixed metal. (11) **when . . them**, so they were exhibited only on occasions of state visits to the temple. (12) **went well**, instead of the destruction threatened and feared; even in the country, as well as in the city, there were times of prosperity. Lit. *there were good words:* signs of national repentance and amendment.

Humiliation the means of deliverance (*v.* 7).—Now from the message which was sent them from the Lord we may properly observe—I. That sin will surely bring the judgment of God upon us. Nor is there any possibility of escape but by repentance, since God has ordained—II. That sin, in order to its being forgiven, must be repented of. It is, however, no little consolation to know—III. That sin, truly repented of, shall assuredly be forgiven. Application:—1. Have you repented? 2. Are you pardoned?[b]

The cartouche of Rehoboam.—It occurs in the third line of sixty-three prisoners. Each figure has his arms tied behind him, a rope round his neck, and is placed on a turreted oval, indicative of a walled city, within which the name is inscribed. From the variety of their features, they are evidently intended to be portraits, or, at least, typical of the people represented. This one has a distinctly Jewish face, and the inscription within the

a 2 Chr. xvi. 8: Da. xi. 43; Na. iii. 9.

b *Troglodytes*, LXX.

c *Gesenius.*

d *Bertheau.*

e "Among the cities fortified by Rehob., and taken by Shishak, we find in the Karnac inscription 3 only, viz., Shoco, Adoraim, and Aijalon. Fourteen names, however, are lost fr. the beginning of the inscription." — *Spk. Com.*

See *J. Alting, Opera* ii., pars. ii. 45.

Jerusalem taken and spoiled

a 1 Ki. xxi. 27—29.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.* We subjoin the inscription in English letters, singularly arranged:

U O I
D
A
M
A
L
K

In this case the first line is to be read like the Hebrew, from right to left. It is generally supposed that we ought to commence at the point towards which the faces of the various animals used in this symbolic writing are turned; and for

oval is Judah-Melek, king of Judah. In other words it is meant for the Rehoboam of Scripture, who was defeated by Sheshonk. And this, I may add, is the only direct illustration of Biblical history afforded by the monuments of Egypt, though indirect illustrations abound.[c]

13—16. (13) **strengthened himself,** by this return in later life to God. **one and forty years,** *see* 1 Ki. xiv. 21 : but if this be his correct age it is singular that he should be classed with young men.[a] (14) **evil,** such is the general estimate of his life : no settled purpose toward God. **prepared,** or fixed.[b] (15) **book of Shemaiah,**[c] who prob., with Iddo, wrote records of the reign. (16) **Abijah,** ch. xi. 22.

The evil of neglected prayer (*v.* 14).—From this conduct of Rehoboam I will take occasion to show—I. How alone a man can be preserved from evil by seeking after God. This implies—1. Meditation ; 2. Self-examination ; 3. Fixedness of heart to follow the dictates of our conscience. We may therefore easily foresee—II. The certain consequence of neglecting the appointed means. For—1. Our corruptions will rage ; 2. Our temptations will multiply ; 3. Our enemies will prevail. Get your minds then deeply imbued with—(1) A sense of your weakness ; (2) A persuasion of the efficacy of prayer ; (3) A conviction of the necessity of holiness in order to your happiness in the eternal world.[d]

Necessity of prayer.—The wise Hillel had a pupil named Maimon, and Hillel was greatly pleased with his talents and his good understanding. But he soon discovered that Maimon was trusting too much to his own wisdom, and had entirely given up prayer. For the young man said in his heart, "What is the use of prayer? Does the omniscient God need our words before He helps us? He would then be like a man. Can a man's prayers and sighs alter His plans? Will not the gracious God give us of Himself whatever is good and useful?" These were the thoughts of the youth. But Hillel was troubled in his heart that Maimon should think himself wiser than the Word of God, and he determined to teach him better. When Maimon went to him one day, Hillel was sitting in his garden, under the shade of a palm tree, meditating, with his head resting upon his hand. And Maimon said to him, "Master, about what are you meditating?" Then Hillel lifted up his head, and said, "I have a friend, who lives upon the produce of his estate. Till now he has carefully cultivated it, and it has well repaid his toil. But now he has thrown away the plough and hoe, and is determined to leave the field to itself ; so that he is sure to come to want and misery." "Has he gone mad?" said the young man, "or fallen into despondency?" "Neither," said Hillel ; "he is of a pious disposition, and well grounded in learning, both human and Divine. But he says : the Lord is omnipotent, and can easily give us nourishment without our bending our head to the ground ; and as He is gracious, He will bless my table and open His hand. And who can contradict him?" "Why," said the young man, "is not that tempting God? Have not you told him so?" Then Hillel smiled, and said, "I will tell him so. You, dear Maimon, are the friend I am speaking of." "I?" said Maimon, and started back. But the old man replied, "Are you not tempting the Lord? Is prayer less than work, and are

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this reason, they are invariably represented in profile

c *Mr. Fairholt, Up the Nile.*

the death of Rehoboam

a 1 Ki. xii. 8.

b Rehoboam's sin was want of earnestness and consistency.

c 1 Chr. xxix. 29.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"He that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and, therefore, is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God."—*Bp. Taylor.*

"Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream of glory on the consecrated hour of man in audience with the Deity : who worships the great God, that instant joins the first in heaven, and sets his foot on hell."—*Young.*

Wanted immediately:—A few more Aarons and Hurs as attendants on the weekly prayer meetings, to pray for the success of the teach-

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ing of the Gospel on the Sabbath.

d Dr. Haven.

spiritual blessings inferior to the fruit of the field? And He who tells you to stoop your head to the earth for the sake of earthly fruit, is He not the same as He who tells you to lift your head towards heaven, to receive His heavenly blessing?" Thus spake Hillel, and looked up to heaven; and Maimon went away and prayed, and his life was a very godly one.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

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Abijah succeeds Jeroboam

a The numbers are immense, but their correctness cannot be reasonably attacked.
b Le. ii. 13; Ez. xliii. 24. Nu xviii. 19.
"Dr. Kane finding a flower under the Humboldt glacier was more affected by it because it grew beneath the lip and cold bosom of the ice, than he would have been by the most gorgeous garden bloom. So some single, struggling grace in the heart of one far removed from Divine influences may be dearer to God than a whole catalogue of virtues in the life of one more favoured of heaven."—*Beecher.*
c Paxton.

1—5. (1) **eighteenth year,** 1 Ki. xv. 1. (2) **Michaiah,** comp. 1 Ki. xv. 2; 2 Chr. xi. 20. **daughter of Uriel,** who married Tamar. (3) **battle in array,** prepared an army.[a] (4) **mount Zemaraim,** near Bethel, on the borders of the territory; it cannot be certainly identified. **mount Ephraim,** the great mountain range of Central Palestine. (5) **covenant of salt,**[b] "to eat salt together was an act of sure friendship and mutual attachment."

A covenant of salt.—The Orientals were accustomed also to ratify their federal engagements by salt. This substance was, among the ancients, the emblem of friendship and fidelity, and therefore used in all their sacrifices and covenants. It is a sacred pledge of hospitality which they never venture to violate. Numerous instances occur of travellers in Arabia, after being plundered and stripped by the wandering tribes of the desert, claiming the protection of some civilised Arab, who, after receiving him into his tent, and giving him salt, instantly relieves his distress, and never forsakes him till he has placed him in safety. An agreement thus ratified is called in Scripture "a covenant of salt." The obligation which this symbol imposes on the mind of an Oriental is well illustrated by the Baron de Tott, in the following anecdote: One who was desirous of his acquaintance, promised in a short time to return. The baron had already attended him halfway down the staircase, when stopping, and turning briskly to one of his domestics, "Bring me, directly," said he, "some bread and salt." What he requested was brought; when, taking a little salt between his fingers, and putting it with a mysterious air on a bit of bread, he ate it with a devout gravity, assuring De Tott he might now rely on him.[c]

Abijah's word to Jeroboam

"The surest way of governing both in a private family and a kingdom, is for a husband and a prince sometimes to drop their prerogative." — *Bishop Hughes.*

When the Rev. Mr. Newton heard an infidel jestingly say,—

6—12. (6) **hath rebelled,** 1 Ki. xi. 26, 27. (7) **children of Belial,** De. xiii. 13. **young,** comp. ch. 13. (8) **sons of David,** the lawful rulers. **golden calves,** the proof of apostasy. (9) **cast out,** ch. xi. 14. **consecrate . . rams,** comp. Ex. xxix. 1; Le. viii. 2. (10) **not forsaken,** this is only true in a degree. (11) **they burn,** *i.e.* the regular Div. service is maintained only by us. (12) **God himself is with us,** so Abijah makes the battle take the character of sacred war.

Abijah's remonstrance with Jeroboam (*v.* 12).—I. We shall consider the words of our text—1. In reference to the contest then pending between Judah and Israel; 2. Abijah's address was certainly striking and judicious; 3. The event justified his expectations. II. In reference to the contest now existing between God and sinners. 1. There is a contest now pending; 2. Suffer the word of exhortation; 3. From the former view of this subject, we may learn how to obtain the blessing of God upon

our aims; 4. From the latter view of this subject, we may learn how to escape the destruction to which we are exposed.[a]

A wise reproof.—During the Protectorate, a certain knight in Surrey had a lawsuit with the minister of his parish; and whilst the dispute was pending Sir John imagined that the sermons delivered at church were preached at him. He therefore complained against the minister to Cromwell, who inquired of the preacher concerning the fact; and having found that his sermons were aimed at the common good, he dismissed the complaining knight, saying, "Go home, Sir John, and hereafter live in good friendship with your minister; the word of the Lord is a searching word, and I am afraid it has found you out." It were well, when we feel uncomfortable with the sermons of our ministers, if, instead of complaining of them, we seriously examined our own character, and applied whatever might be suitable to our own case.

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"I always spend the Sunday in settling my accounts," that venerable minister turned round and said, in an accent of deep solemnity, "You may find, sir, that the day of judgment is to be spent in exactly the same manner."

[a] *C. Simeon, M.A*

13—18. (13) **ambushment,** poss. arranged while Abijah was haranguing. The effort was to take the army of Judah at once in front and rear. (14) **the battle,** the hostile army. (15) **God smote,** granting success to the arms of Judah. (16) **fled,**[a] bec. God fought for Judah, responding to the appeal wh. Abijah made. (17) **fell down slain,** or *hors de combat:* the list includes the killed and wounded, but even then the numbers are enormous. (18) **brought under,** defeated, not made tributary.

Caractacus.—Caractacus, after defending himself with invincible bravery against the Romans, who had invaded his dominions, was treacherously seized and betrayed to his enemies, by whom he was sent, with the rest of his family, in chains to Rome. The behaviour of Caractacus, in that metropolis of the world, was truly great. When brought before the emperor, he appeared with a manly and undaunted countenance, and thus addressed himself to Claudius:—"If in my prosperity the moderation of my conduct had been equivalent to my birth and fortune, I should have come into this city not as a captive but as a friend; nor would you, Cæsar, have disdained the alliance of a man born of illustrious ancestors, and ruler over several nations. My present fate is to me dishonourable; to you magnificently glorious. I once had horses; I once had men; I once had arms; I once had riches: can you wonder, then, I should part with them unwillingly? Although, as Romans, you may aim at universal empire, it does not follow that all mankind must tamely submit to be your slaves. If I had yielded without resistance, neither the perverseness of my fortune, nor the glory of your triumph, had been so remarkable. Punish me with death, and I shall soon be forgotten. Suffer me to live, and I shall remain a lasting monument of your clemency." The manner in which this noble speech was delivered affected the whole assembly, and made such an impression on the emperor, that he ordered the chains of Caractacus and his family to be taken off; and Agrippina, who was more than an equal associate in the empire, not only received the captive Britons with great marks of kindness and compassion, but confirmed to them the enjoyment of their liberty.

the death of Jeroboam

[a] "The merciless slaughter that ensued can be accounted for only by tracing it to the rancorous passions enkindled by a civil war."—*Jamieson.*

"A wise and virtuous man, when in adversity, may, like a dark lantern in the night, seem dull and dark to those who are about him; but within, he is full of light and brightness; and when he chooses to open the door, he can show it."—*Feltham.*

"Let prosperity be as oil to the wheels of obedience; and affliction as wind to the sails of prayer."—*Philip Henry.*

"True patriots we, for, be it understood, we left our country for our country's good."—*Barrington.*

19—22. (19) **Bethel,** the frontier town in wh. one of the

the pros-

B.C. 958.

perity of Abijah

calves was placed. **with the towns,** *i.e.* villages or suburbs. **Jeshanah,** not known. **Ephraim,** poss. identical with Ophrah. (20) **recover strength,** for war.[a] **struck him,** *i.e.* Jeroboam: this indic. premature death, though he lived two years longer than Abijah.[b] (21) **mighty,** profiting by the weakness of Jeroboam, and the years of peace. (22) **story,** or commentary.[c]

The patriot minister.—When his Grace the Duke of Bedford negociated a peace with France, he signed the preliminaries with the French minister, Choiseul, and stipulated no farther for the East India Company than he was advised by the Court of Directors. A gentleman, a Dutch Jew, of great abilities and respectable character, hearing this, wrote a letter to the duke, informing him that the English East India Company had materially neglected their own interest, as their chief conquests were made subsequent to the period at which they had fixed their claim of sovereignty; and if these latter conquests were to be restored, an immense annual revenue would necessarily be taken from England. The duke, struck with the force of the fact, yet greatly embarrassed how to act, as preliminaries were actually signed, repaired to the French minister, and addressed him thus:—"My lord, I have committed a great mistake in signing the preliminaries, as the affair of the Indian possessions must be carried down to the last conquest in Asia." To this Choiseul replied:—"Your Grace astonishes me; I thought I had been treating with the minister of a great nation, and not with a student in politics, who does not consider the validity of written engagements." The duke replied:—"Your reproach, my lord, is just; but I will not add treachery to negligence, nor deliberately betray my country because I have unaccountably neglected her interests in a single circumstance; therefore, unless your lordship agrees to cede the latter conquests in India, I shall return home in twelve hours, and submit the fate of my head to an English parliament." Choiseul, struck with the intrepidity of the duke, yielded the point, and Britain now enjoys above half a million annually through the firmness of a man whom it was once even patriotism to calumniate. On the termination of the affair to his satisfaction, his Grace gave the Dutch gentleman the warmest recommendation to the English East India Company, who conferred upon him a pension of £500 annually for the important service which he had rendered.[d]

[a] "The battle at Zemaraim both crippled his power and broke his spirits."—*Jamieson.*

[b] 1 Ki. xiv. 20.

[c] 2 Chr. xii. 15. "Heb. *midrash*, a commentary, fr. *darash*, to tread, search, study."—*Gesenius.*

[d] *Percy Anec.* "As St. Paul; the viper came upon his hand, he shaked it off; some would have swelled, and almost died at the very sight of such a thing, but he did but shake it off. And so should we do by our reproaches; when reproaches are opposed they do grow; as hair, the more it is cut the more it grows, when they are despised they will vanish away."—*Burroughes.* "His honour rooted in dishonour stood, and faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."—*Tennyson.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

Asa succeeds to the throne

1—5. (1) **Asa,** *physician*, 1 Ki. xv. 8. 11. Prob. Asa was quite a youth when he began to reign. **quiet ten years,** in consequence of the great victory gained in Abijah's reign.[a] (2) **good and right,** the addition of the word "good" suggests that Asa did right in an acceptable manner, putting his heart into it. (3) **strange gods,** the Phœnician worship of Baal, etc., extended even into Judah.[b] **high places,** first mentioned Nu. xxiii. 3. **images,** Baal statues. **groves,** pillars or statues of Astarte.[c] (4) **commanded Judah,** not merely setting an example, but exerting his authority to re-establish the worship of

[a] 2 Chr. xiii. 16—18.

[b] Comp. 2 Chr. xii. 1. 2. 5.

[c] 1 Ki. xiv. 23, xv. 13.

[d] Le. xxvi. 30.

Jehovah. (5) **images**, a different word fr. that trans. images in *v.* 3, *lit.* images of the sun.[d]

Sun-images.—We see these "sun-images" were connected with the altars and worship of Baal. The "sun-images" are principally, if not exclusively, kept in the temple of Siva. They are made of black granite, in the shape of a man, and about his size. There are, however, many of them with only a head, having a halo or numerous coruscations to represent the orb of day. Thus in the houses of rich natives may be seen near a niche, on one side the representation of the sun, and on the other a figure of the crescent moon. The temple images are placed on the east side, and offerings are sometimes presented to them before they are taken to the idol.[e]—*A test of religion.*—"Happening," says Mr. Buckingham, "to be travelling with a caravan to Jidda and Mecca, on the way down I was a good deal in the society of an intelligent Mahometan merchant, a native of Fez, the capital of Morocco. His having come from the western extremity of Africa to visit the 'Holy City' was a sufficient proof that he was a zealous and staunch believer in the Mahometan doctrine. Having ascertained that he would listen, without being offended at any objections I might make to his religion, I asked him if it had never occurred to him that his religion was *not intended* to be universal, and that it *could not* possibly be universally adopted. He replied that it never had occurred to him ; and that could this be proved, it would shake his confidence in the origin of his religion, since it was impossible that it could be Divine were it not of universal application, as it would be hard, indeed, to require that all mankind should do that which was only practicable to a part. 'Well,' I replied, 'you Mahometans are as ignorant of geography as you are of most other things, otherwise you would know that there are countries where there is light six months in the year, and darkness the other six ; in other words, the sun is six months above the horizon without setting, and six months below it without rising, so that there is but one day and one night in the year. Now, every Mahometan is expressly enjoined during the ramadan, to abstain from every article of meat and drink *from the rising to the setting of the sun;* an injunction the fulfilment of which in the countries I have named is plainly impossible.' He said it was impossible there could be such a country ; but I having demonstrated the fact to him, the argument had such an effect upon him, that, instead of proceeding to the temple at Mecca, the object of his long and weary pilgrimage, he stopped at Jidda, transacted his business there, returned to Fez, and never went to Mecca at all!"[f]

6–9. (6) **built**, with the frequent sense of restored or fortified. **fenced cities**, prob. those wh. Rehoboam had built, and Shishak may have dismantled.[a] (7) **yet before us**, *i.e.* open to us. Let us take the opportunity of the freedom of the land from hostile forces.[b] (8) **targets**, *etc.*, 1 Ki. x. 16. These were the heavy-armed portion of his army.[c] (9) **Zerah the Ethiopian**, or Cushite. Prob. a king of Egypt, identified with Osorken II., the third king after Shishak : second king of the twenty-second dynasty.[d] Some think Zerah was only chief of a nomad horde of Ethiopians of Arabia.[e] **Mareshah**, 2 Chr. xi. 8, 26 m. S.W. of Jerus., in the line of march from Egypt.

Marksmen.—Montaigne relates that "an offer was made to

B.C. 955.

e Roberts

"Idolatry!—you cannot find any more gross, any more cruel, on the broad earth, than within the area of a mile around this pulpit. Dark minds, from which God is obscured; deluded souls, whose fetish is the dice-box or the bottle; apathetic spirits, steeped in sensual abomination, unmoved by a moral ripple, soaking in the swamp of animal vitality; false gods, more hideous, more awful, than Moloch or Baal, worshipped with shrieks, worshipped with curses with the hearthstone for the bloody altar, and the drunken husband for the immolating priest, and women and children for the victims." — *Dr. Chapin.*

f Whitecross.

"Hear, parent sun! bright eye and monarch of the world."—*Peter Motteux.*

Asa's fortresses and army

a 2 Chr. xi. 5—12; 1 Ki. xiv. 25—28. Comp. 1 Ki. xv. 22.

b From this it appears that the country was free fr. its tribute to Egypt. 2 Chr. xii. 8.

B.C. 1015.

e "This large number does not mean a body of professional soldiers, such as compose European armies, but all capable of bearing arms, and liable to be called into service."—*Jamieson.*

d So *Keil, Wordsworth, Spk. Com., etc.*

e *Jamieson,* in *Crit. Com.*

f *Percy. Anec.*

an excellent archer, condemned to die, that his life should be saved, if he would show some proof of his art; but he refused to try, fearing lest his agitation should make him shoot wide, and that instead of preserving his life, he should lose the reputation he had got of being a good marksman." Of the precision with which the Americans manage the rifle. Priest. in his *Travels in America*, gives the following account, which it must be confessed partakes of the marvellous. He says:—"During the late war, in 1775, a company of riflemen, formed from the backwoodsmen of Virginia, was quartered at Lancaster, in New England, for some time. Two of them alternately held a board only nine inches square, between his knees, while his comrades fired a ball through it, from a distance of one hundred paces! The board is still preserved; and I am assured, by several who were present, that it was performed without any manner of deception." In October, 1812, James Westwick, the keeper of Sir Henry Vane Tempest, being in the gun-room at Wynyard, Durham, a hare was observed from the window, at a considerable distance, which, by the particular desire of Sir Henry, the keeper shot at, and killed with a ball, at a distance of one hundred and fifty-five yards.*f*

Asa defeats Zerah

10—15. (10) **valley of Zephathah,** a plain near the town of Mareshah, chosen by Zerah as battle-field for the convenience of his chariots.*a* (11) **nothing,** *etc., i.e.* it is equally easy.*b* **we rest on thee,** the best plea we can make before God is our trust of the whole case to Him.*c* **man,** marg. mortal man. (12) **the Lord smote,** gave strength to smite the little company thus piously trusting Him. (13) **Gerar,** Ge. x. 19. on the S.W. border of Palestine, sixty miles fr. Jerus.*d* (14) **cities round about Gerar,** these were prob. at this time in the hands of Philistines, who aided Zerah, and so were now punished. (15) **camels,** bred in the district for desert journeying.

A providential escape.—A merchant was one day returning from market. He was on horseback, and behind him was a valise filled with money. The rain fell with violence, and the good old man was wet to his skin. At this he was vexed, and murmured because God had given him such bad weather for his journey. He soon reached the borders of a thick forest. What was his terror, on beholding on one side of the road a robber, with levelled gun, aiming at him, and attempting to fire! But the powder being wet by the rain, the gun did not go off, and the merchant, giving spurs to his horse, fortunately had time to escape. As soon as he found himself safe, he said to himself:—"How wrong was I, not to endure the rain patiently as sent by Providence. If the weather had been dry and fair, I should not, probably, have been alive at this hour, and my little children would have expected my return in vain. The rain which caused me to murmur, came at a fortunate moment, to save my life and preserve my property." And thus it is with a multitude of our afflictions; by causing us slight and short sufferings, they preserve us from others far greater, and of longer duration.*e*

a Supposed to be the broadway coming down *Beit Jibrin*, towards *Tell-es-Safreh.*"—*Robinson.*

b 1 Sa. xiv. 6.

c 2 Chr. xvi. 8; Ps. xviii. 10, xxii. 5.

d "The results wh. follow this victory are most striking. The southern power cannot rally fr. the blow, but rapidly declines, and for above 3 centuries makes no further effort in this direction. All fear of Egypt as an aggressive power ceases; and the Israelites learn instead to lean upon the Pharaohs for support."—*Spk. Com.* c. 11. *Geo. Leslie,* 21.

e *Arvine.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

B.C. 1042.

Azariah exhorts Asa

1—7. (1) **spirit,** *etc.*, Nu. xxiv. 2. **Oded,** poss. *Iddo.* An Oded is subsequently mentioned.[a] (2) **meet Asa,** on his return fr. the victory over Zerah. **while ye be with him,** intimating that the condition of prosperity was "continuance in well-doing:" and that precisely in this they were likely to fail. **seek him,** as they had done in this battle.[b] (3) **long season,** *lit.* there were many days to Israel (when it belonged) to no God of truth."[c] The proph. recalls many historical cases of apostasy.[d] **teaching priest,** instruction and guidance in the national duty to God belonged to priestly office. (4) **turn,** in penitence. (5) **no peace,**[e] the word used signifies especially commotion or trouble sent fr. God. (6) **nation,** *etc.*, as Ju. xx. 33—48. (7) **strong,** to continue in the way thus so well begun.

God's presence with a people (*v.* 2).—I. What was the happiness which they enjoyed? The presence of God, in His covenant of grace with any people, is the greatest glory and happiness they can enjoy. This may be demonstrated both by Scripture and by reason. It includes—1. The owning them as His own people; 2. Assisting and prospering them in all this; 3. Protecting them from all enemies. II. The condition upon which they held it. 1. The duration of this happiness; 2. Its degree; 3. God will be with His people, their glory, portion, prosperity, and protection, just as they are with Him. Learn:—To be with God is not merely to bear His name, to be called His people, to draw near to Him in external performances: it is, to be a consecrated people, to be true worshippers, to be engaged in His service.[f]

Religion a help in life.—How it helps a man to suffer and to toil! How it calms his temper and soothes his spirit! How it heals his wounds and anoints him with joy. "His tool slipped," says Malan, in his beautiful tract, *The Watchmaker of Geneva;* "his tool slipped, and the work was spoiled. He repeated the attempt, and again he was unsuccessful. A slight and momentary expression of trouble appeared on his countenance, but the cloud soon passed away. He clasped his hands, and looked upward, while his lips moved as if uttering a silent and fervent prayer. The expression of trouble disappeared; he resumed his work." And so many a good man, in his cottage or workshop, amidst the spoiling of his work, or the breaking of his tools, or the anger of his master, or the losing of his employment, or the cries of his children, or the sorrows of his wife, or the sickness of his body, or the trouble of his soul, finds prayer is the secret of peace. And in manifold ways does religion bless the poor man in his pilgrimage. Faith is the rod with which he cleaves the Red Seas of difficulty; and God's Word is a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, amidst the rocks of a sandy wilderness. And Sabbaths are wells of water; and ordinances are beautiful and shady palm trees; and prayer brings down manna every morning; and the sight of the cross heals the bite of fiery serpents; and hope is a spy going beforehand, to bring back the clusters of Eshcol. And then at last, God's presence is as the

[a] 2 Chr. xxviii. 9.

[b] 1 Chr. xxviii. 9; Jer. xxix. 13.

[c] *Wordsworth.*

[d] Such as Ju. ix. 23, xii. 4, xx. 21; 2 Chr. xiii. 17.

[e] Illus. by Ju. v. 6.

See *J. Alting, Op.* 2, Pt. 2, 65.

vv. 1, 2. *S. Partridge,* i. 309.

v. 2. *Dr. E. Lake,* 46; *W. Strong,* 231; *T. Cole, Morn. Ex.* iii. 471; *Bp. Burnet,* 1; *Abp. Secker,* viii. 1; *Dr. W. Craig,* i. 33; *Dr. R. Monkhouse,* iii. 269; *T. W. Fowle,* ii. 238.

v. 7. *Dr. J. Brown, Ser. for Lord's Supper,* 297.

[f] *S. Marshall.*

"Let us not conceive of all genuine religion as moving in one groove of feeling and practice, and refuse to acknowledge any man as a Christian because he does not run upon our particular groove. There are several points of view from which Christianity may be surveyed; and although it be one and the same object from whatever point we look, yet eyes placed on different levels will see it grouped in different perspectives."—*Dr. Goulburn.*

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g Dr. Stoughton.

Asa abolishes idolatry

a So read the Alex., Sept., the Syriac, and the Vulgate.

b "The sole remedy is to erase them. They are probably the remains of a note, wh. crept in fr. the margin into the text."—*Bertheau.*

c Re. xvii. 4, 5.

d 2 Chr. xiv. 13, 15.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

"When Diogenes heard Zeno with subtile arguments endeavouring to prove that there was no motion, he suddenly starts up and walks; Zeno asking the cause thereof, said Diogenes, 'Hereby I confute you, and prove that there is motion.' Walking with God is the best way to confute them that think religion to be but a notion; living religion will prove that there is religion."—*Venning.*

f Prof. Arthur.

Asa deposes Maachah

a "When Abijah was chosen above all his brothers as successor, she filled the high office known in Jerus., as in the Turkish Empire, by a peculiar name — the queen-mother — Gebirah the Leader, *the Sultana Valide;* and

ark in the midst of the river; and the pilgrim passes dryshod into "the land that floweth with milk and honey."*g*

8—13. (8) **prophecy of Oded,** prob. some words have dropped out, and it should read, "the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded."*a* Some would remove the expression, "prophecy of Oded," as a corruption.*b* **abominable idols,** more generally abominations, including the abominable things connected with the worship of idols.*c* (9) **strangers,** pious Israelites drawn into the territory of Judah by this restored worship of Jehovah. (10) **they gathered,** for solemn renewal of the national covenant. (11) **of the spoil,***d* as thank-offering. (12) **to seek,** by the covenant pledging themselves to seek. (13) **put to death,** De. xvii. 2—6.

Encouragement to exertion.—Two extremes to which men are inclined—presumption and despondency. To the former, the ungodly are inclined; to the latter, the righteous, as a needed encouragement. I. In the passage before us, we have an historic record. II. An encouraging example. We have difficulties; the words of the prophet are addressed to us; they should produce in us a similar effect. We have many words of encouragement.*e*

Exertion ordained by God.—If God had so pleased, He could undoubtedly have rendered every being He has formed completely happy. He could have made them incapable even of rendering themselves miserable. He could have made them necessary instead of voluntary agents, and compelled them to act in the way that would infallibly have produced felicity; or He might have contrived men in such a manner that they must have been happy in whatever way they acted. He has not ordered matters in such a way: and therefore we may be sure that He never intended to do so. Everything is so conducted that His creatures arise to greater and greater degrees of happiness, in consequence of their own exertions, and in consequence of the improvement which, by His appointment, follows from their exertions. The more wise and virtuous they become, the more happy they are of consequence. It is evident, therefore, though the Deity intended to communicate happiness, and has done so in the most liberal manner, yet this was not the only end He had in view. He intended to make man happy; but it was in a particular manner, which He knew would at last contribute to the greatest general felicity of the species.*f*

14—19. (14) **sware,** took the covenant vow. **loud voice,** *etc.*, indicating the national earnestness and joy. (15) **rest,** another period after the victory, like the one that preceded it. (16) **Maachah,** 1 Ki. xv. 13. **queen,** or queen-mother.*a* **idol in a grove,** or private sanctuary, in wh. was an obscene wooden image. **stamped,** *etc.*, comp. similar acts of Moses,*b* and Hezekiah.*c* **Kidron,** 2 Sa. xv. 23. (17) **high . . not taken away,** some qualification is therefore necessary of such a passage as ch. xiv. 3, 5.*d* **perfect,** *i.e.* true, sincere. (18) **dedicated,** after his victory over Jeroboam.*e* (19) **five and thirtieth,** prob. shd. be five and *twentieth*, to accord with the chronology given in Kings.

Asa's covenant with God.—We will distinctly consider—I. What covenant they made; 1. The covenant itself. 2. The manner in

which they made it. We propose this as a pattern for us—(1) in the matter, and (2) in the manner of it. That we may be stirred up to enter into this covenant, let us contemplate—II. The benefits resulting from it. We shall conclude with two proposals—1. To those who think such an entire devotion of themselves to God unnecessary; and 2. To those who desire to approve themselves to God in the way that He requires.*f*

The best use for an idol.—Some years ago, Mr. Ward, a Christian missionary, in going through a village near Calcutta, left at a native shop a Bengalee New Testament, that it might be read by any of the villagers. About a year afterwards, three or four of the most intelligent of the inhabitants came to inquire further respecting the contents of the book left in their village. This ended in six or eight of them making a public profession of Christianity. Among these, one deserves peculiar notice. An old man, named Juggernath, who had long been a devotee to the idol of that name in Orissa, had made many pilgrimages thither, and had acquired such a name for sanctity, that a rich man in Orissa was said to have offered him a pension for life, on condition of his remaining with him. On his becoming acquainted with the New Testament, he first hung his image of Khrishnoo, or Juggernath, which he had hitherto worshipped, on a tree in his garden, and at length cut it up to boil his rice. He remained steadfast in his profession of Christianity till his death. Two others, being men of superior natural endowments, employed themselves in publishing the doctrines of Christianity to their countrymen in the most fearless manner; while their conduct was such as to secure them universal esteem.*g*

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

B.C. 1042.

her influence continued through his reign and that of her grandson, Asa."—*Stanley.*

b Ex. xxxii. 20.

c 2 Ki. xviii. 4.

d "It is proposed to reconcile the apparent discrepancy by distinguishing bet. two kinds of high places, those where Jehovah was worshipped, and those dedicated to other gods. It may, however, be that he *actually accomplished* less than he *intended*."—*Spk. Com.*

e 2 Chr. xiii. 16—19.

f *C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 14. *L. Sterne*, vi. 55.

v. 15. *Dr. P. Doddridge*, iii.202.

g *Cheever.*

B.C. *cir.* 1042.

Baasha invades Judah

1—6. (1) **six and thirtieth,** see note on ch. xv. 19. **Baasha,** 1 Ki. xv. 16, 17. **Ramah,** Jos. xviii. 25.*a* **go out,** *etc.*, he designed to stop all communication between the countries. (2) **Ben-hadad,** son of Tabrimon, son of Hezion, king of Syria. The smaller principalities round Damascus were at this time subject to him. **Damascus,** Ge. xiv. 15. (3) **there is a,** better. *let there be a.* **break,** *etc.*, a league with the northern part of the country was more useful to Ben-hadad, unless he had designs of seizing Israelitish territory. (4) **Ijon,** 1 Ki. xv. 20.*b* **Dan,** Jos. xix. 47. **Abel-maim,** 1 Ki. xv. 20. **store cities,** 2 Chr. viii. 6. (5) **building,** fortifying. (6) **Geba,** Jos. xviii. 24. **Mizpah,** Ge. xxxi. 45—55.

Heavenly treasure.—Use all diligence to gain such a treasure as lies above the reach of the storms of this world—a kingdom that cannot be shaken—namely, our peace with God in Christ, the pardon of our sins, and a well-grounded hope and assurance of eternal life. These are the things that lie out of gun-shot, and will render the greatest troubles that can befall this lower world, or us in it, not only tolerable, but small and inconsiderable; when in the midst of all the concussions of the world, in the midst of losses of goods or estate, in the midst of storms, and confusions, and disasters, and calamities, a man can have such deep and settled considerations as these:—Though I can see nothing but confusions, and little hopes of their amendment, yet

a "As after the division of the kingdom there was a continual flow of the more piously disposed Israelites into Judah, Baasha endeavoured to prevent this by fortifying Ramah."—*Ayre*

b "The present name of the plain is *Merj Ajjun*—a mere variation of the Heb. It is about 6 miles long and 2 broad, with a regular descent southward fr. a great mound at the north end. The top of this mound is covered with the rubbish of the

B.C. *cir.* 1042.

ancient city. Tradition makes this the site of Hanan."—*Thomson.*

The largest treasure an unconverted man is heaping up to himself, is wrath against the day of wrath.

e Sir M. Hale.

Hanani reproves Asa

a Comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 11, xv. 2, 7.

b Ge. x. 13. *Lehabim.*

c 1 Sa. xiii. 13.

d So called bec. the limbs of the prisoner were so set and fixed as to be twisted and distorted in it.

Jer. xx. 2, xxix. 26; Ac. xvi. 24.

e J. Ryland.

f Dr. Thomas.

g C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 8, 9. *J. Milner,* iii. 403.

v. 9. *H. Wilkinson,* iii. 52; *S. Charnock, Wks.; F. Arnold,* 193.

"As there is no babe cradled and rocked that has not its mother, in the ordinary course of life, to overhang it by night and by day, to kiss it as it sleeps, and to cover it with smiles and caresses when it wakes; so every creature that is born into life has a God whose ever watchful soul broods tenderly over it by day and by night, and who intersphères it in His own radiant

I have that which is out of the reach of all these; that which is infinitely more valuable to me than the best which the world can give: that which I can please and comfort myself in, notwithstanding all these worldly distractions and fears—namely, the assurance of my peace with the great God of heaven and earth. The worst that I can suffer by these discomposures and the most I can fear from them is but death; and that will not only put a period to the things I suffer or can fear in this life, but will let me into the actual possession of my hopes, even such a state of glory and happiness as never can be ended or shaken. Such a hope and such an assurance as this will keep the soul above water, and in a state of peace and tranquillity, in all the tempests and shipwrecks that can befall either this inferior world, or any person in it.[e]

7—10. (7) **Hanani,** 1 Ki. xvi. 1. **seer,** 1 Sa. ix. 9. **relied . . God,** the condition of Asa's prosperity was the maintenance of that trust wh. had already led to victory.[a] **escaped,** *i.e.* an opportunity of victory has been lost. (8) **Ethiopians,** *etc.,* 2 Chr. xiv. 9. **Lubims,** *dwellers in a scorched land;* same as *Libyans.*[b] (9) **foolishly,** comp. Saul.[c] **wars,** comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 1, 6, 7, xv. 15. (10) **prison house,** Heb. *house of distortion.*[d]

The eyes of the Lord (*v.* 9).— We have here—I. The description of Providence. "The eyes of the Lord" in Scripture signify—1. His knowledge; 2. His providence—the immediateness of providence—its celerity and speed—its extent—its diligence—its efficacy. II. The design of Providence. To show Himself strong, etc. 1. He has strong understanding and wisdom to contrive; 2. Strong affections to love; 3. Strong words to cheer and fortify; 4. A strong arm to exert almighty power. Remember the persons for whom,—those who are truly gracious and sincere.[e]—*The world's guardian.*—From this text we learn—I. That God's guardianship of the world is universally inspective. II. That it is personally exercised. III. That it is morally designed. Hence the subject teaches the true spirit of life, as in the sight of God. 1. The true interests of life; 2. A perfect heart; 3. The true judge of life.[f]—*God's regard for His people.*—Let us consider—I. When the heart may be said to be perfect towards God. 1. When our trust in God is entire; 2. When our desire to serve Him is supreme. Let us mark—II. What tender regard God shows for persons of that character. 1. He will show Himself strong in their behalf; 2. He will search out all occasions for such displays of His power. As an improvement of this subject, we will suggest a few words—(1) Of warning; (2) Of encouragement.[g]

Omnipresence of God.—To the Hebrews the external universe is just a black screen concealing God. All things are full of, yet all distinct from Him. The cloud on the mountain is His covering; the muttering from the chamber of the thunder is His voice; that sound on the top of the mulberry trees is His "going;" in that wind, which bends the forest or curls the clouds, He is walking; that sun is His still commanding eye. Whither can they go from His spirit? whither can they flee from His presence? At every step and in every circumstance they feel themselves God-enclosed, God-filled, God-breathing men, with a spiritual presence lowering or smiling on them from the sky, sounding in wild tempest, or creeping in panic stillness across the surface of

the earth ; and if they turn within, lo ! it is there also,—an "eye" hung in the central darkness of their own hearts. Hence the Muse of the Hebrew bard is not Dame Memory, nor any of her syren daughters, but the almighty, all-pervading Spirit Himself, who is at once the subject, the auditor, and the inspirer of the song.[h]

11—14. (11) **book**, *etc.*, this is the one preserved to us under this title. (12) **diseased in his feet**, prob. by the gout. **exceeding great**, or *mored upward*, indic. the violent and dangerous type of the malady.[a] **physicians**, who were not scientific healers, but pretended to expel disease by magical rites. (13) **one and fortieth**, 1 Ki. xv. 10. (14) **sepulchres**, rock tombs contained many places for bodies. **made**, Heb. *digged*. **sweet odours**, comp. Mk. xvi. 1; Lu. xxiii. 56, xxiv. 1. **burning**, also of spices.[b]

The bed of sweet spices (*v.* 14).—According to a tradition that prevailed among the Turks, "an eminent prophet, who lived in Mesopotamia many ages ago, whose name was Zachariah, was beheaded by the prince of that country, on account of his virtuous opposition to some lewd scheme of his. His head he ordered to be put in a stone urn, two feet square, upon the top of which was an inscription, importing that that urn enclosed the head of that great prophet Zechariah. This urn remained in the castle of Aleppo till about 800 years ago, when it was removed into an old Christian church in that city, afterward turned into a mosque, which decaying, another was built near it, and the place where the head was deposited choked up by a wall." Mr. Drummond wrote this account in 1748. About the year 1708, a zealous grand vizier, who pretended to have been admonished in a dream to remove this stone vessel into a more conspicuous place, had it removed accordingly, with many religious ceremonies, and affixed in a conspicuous part of the mosque ; and at the close of all it is said, "The urn was opened and filled with spices and perfumes to the value of £400." Here we see in late times honour was done to the supposed head of an eminent saint, by filling its repository with odoriferous substances. The bed of sweet spices, in which Asa was laid, seems to have been of the same kind, or something very much like it. Might not large quantities of precious perfumes, in like manner, be strewed, or designed to be strewed about the body of our Lord ? This would require large quantities. Zechariah of Mesopotamia had been dead so long, that nothing of this kind could be done with any view to preserve his head from decay, it was merely to do him honour. The spices used by the Jews in burial might be for the same purpose.[d]

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thought and feeling."—*Beecher.*

h Gilfillan.

the death of Asa

a Jamieson.

b 2 Chr. xxi. 19; Jer. xxxiv. 5.

"The burning of spices in honour of a king at his funeral was customary, and the only peculiarity in the instance before us was the large quantity, and perhaps the rare quality, of the spice burnt." —*Spk. Com.*

v. 12. *Dr. J. Conant*, iii. 299.

"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away: O! that the earth, which kept the world in awe, should patch a wall, to expel the winter's flaw!" — *Shakespeare.*

"Ambition mad, that stems alone the boisterous surge with bladders blown." — *Hamilton.*

d Harmer.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1042.

Jehoshaphat becomes king

1—6. (1) **Jehoshaphat**, *whom Jehovah judges*, *i.e.* whose cause He sustains. **strengthened**, *etc.*, prepared himself to resist, made defensive preparations.[a] (2) **forces**, troops of soldiers. **garrisons**, better officers.[b] **cities of Eph.**, 2 Chr. xv. 8. (3) **Lord was with**, graciously accepting and blessing him. **first ways**, before David fell into his grievous sins.[c] **Baalim**, a plural word, expressing the various aspects under wh. Baal was

a "The temper and proceedings of the kings of Israel rendered it necessary for

B.C. *cir.* 1035.

him to prepare vigorous measures of defence on the northern frontier of his kingdom; and these consisted in filling all the fortresses with their full complement of troops, and establishing military stations in various parts of the country, as well as in the cities of Mount Ephraim, which belonged to Jehoshaphat. (Ch. xv. 8)."—*Jamieson.*

b As 1 Ki. iv. 7, 19.

c "Some, with less probability, render this, 'in the ways of David, the earliest ways of his father,' *i.e.* of Asa." — *Wordsworth.*

d 1 Sa. x. 27.

e Christian Treas. (1859).

he orders the word of the Lord to be taught

a Le. x. 11; De. xvii. 9—11; Mal. ii. 7.

b The Philistine territory lay exposed to Egyptian ravages.

1 Ki. iv. 21.

c 2 Ki. iii. 4.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

God is the first truth and primitive goodness; true religion is a vigorous efflux and emanation of both upon the sprits of men, and, therefore, is called "a participation of the Divine nature."

worshipped. (4) **doings,** Baal worship was at this time being established by Ahab, etc. (5) **presents,**[d] in addition to the taxes. (6) **lifted up,** in confidence, not in pride.

The working hand and the happy heart.—The chief things for a traveller on such a pilgrimage as ours is a right goal before him, the right road before him, the right impulse within him. The chief thoughts of which we are here reminded are—I. Religion pervading our life—the Lord. II. Activity pervading our religion—the ways. III. Cheerfulness pervading our activity.[e]

Example of earnestness.—When Dr. Chalmers occupied the chair of philosophy in the College of St. Andrews, he used to gather into his own house each Sabbath evening, the poorest and most ignorant of the vagrant children of the neighbourhood; and his biography states, that, for that audience, he prepared himself as carefully, with his pen in his hand, as for his class in the university. So, on a winter day, through frost, and in the face of a driving snow-storm, you might have seen him walking five miles to fulfil an appointment of religious worship with a little company of rustic people at Kilmany; and there, amid some illiterate, shivering cottagers, too few for a church or chapel, met in a damp room,—an audience that many men would have thought it expedient to dismiss at once "on account of the weather," and many more would have put off with some crude, unpremeditated talk,—he preached as laboured and as eloquent a sermon as would have moved to rapture and wonder the learning and fashion of Glasgow or of London.

7—11. (7) **to teach,** not only destroying the false, but doing all he could to promote that wh. was true. The princes were to see that this teaching was properly done. (8) **Levites,** these were to be the actual teachers.[a] (9) **the book of the law,** a copy of the Pentateuch. (10) **the fear,** *etc.*, Jehovah's power to defend the kings who faithfully served Him had been often proved. (11) **Philistines,**[b] times had changed so that they now sought the strength of alliance with Judah. **tribute silver,** or silver in abundance. **Arabians,** Arab tribes south of Judah. **flocks,** paying their tribute *in kind.*[c]

The royal edict.—I. We notice the edict of king Jehoshaphat. 1. Mark the benevolence displayed in it; 2. Its policy was not inferior to its benevolence; 3. The benefits arising from it were incalculable. II. The manner in which it was carried into execution. This suggests—1. That loyalty to the king demands our concurrence with him in his good work; 2. That gratitude to the Jewish nation demands it at our hands; 3. A love to the rising generation should lead us to avail ourselves of the present opportunity to promote their welfare; 4. That a concern for the honour of our holy religion should operate to unite us all in executing the royal edict.[d]

Arabs.—The Arabs have effected, although in a rude way, far more than the Greeks and Romans towards making the eastern and western worlds acquainted with each other, and communicating arts and knowledge. These (until inspired with the fanaticism of a new religion) housekeeping barbarians pushed their religion, arms, arts, and trade, within thirty years to the western confines of India, and in eighty-eight years to Spain. They pushed their commerce into China and the remotest islands

of the Indian Ocean; which neither Greek nor Roman had ever reached. We owe to their fanaticism cotton, coffee, the sugar-cane and culture of sugar, paper, arithmetical notation, race horses, the whole citron and orange tribe of fruits, and all the various products of distillation.[e]

B.C. *cir.* 1042.

e Crawford, Proc. of Brit. Assoc.

12—19. (12) **castles**, comp. ch. xxvii. 4, places of defence, situated for the protection of roads, or valleys opening into the country. **cities of store**, where provisions and ammunition could be kept in preparation of siege. (13) **business**, with special reference to building and repairing of cities. **the men**, or, *he had men* (14—18), the number given here is so great we are obliged to regard the text as in some way corrupted.[a] (19) **fenced cities**, garrisons.

Jehoshaphat's prosperity

a "Jehoshaphat's kingdom was not a third of Dav.'s. David's muster amounted to 1,300,000 men of valour. (2 Sa. xxiv. 9.) Jehoshaphat had 1,160,000."—*Wordsworth.*

"It is probable that the original numbers have been lost, and the loss supplied by a scribe, who took ch. xiv. 8 as his basis."—*Spk. Com.*

Activity.—Dr. Adam Clarke said that "the old proverb about having too many irons in the fire was an abominable old lie. Have all in it,—shovel, tongs, and poker." Wesley said, "I am always in haste, but never in a hurry: leisure and I have long taken leave of each other." He travelled about five thousand miles in a year: preached about three times a day, commencing at five o'clock in the morning; and his published works amounted to about two hundred volumes. Asbury travelled six thousand miles a year, and preached incessantly. Coke crossed the Atlantic eighteen times, preached, wrote, travelled, established missions, begged from door to door for them, and laboured in all respects as if, like the Apostles, he "would turn the world upside down." At nearly seventy years of age he started to Christianise India.[b]—*Evils of inactivity.*—What a mournful sight the observer may see in some of the outskirts of our huge city; row after row of houses all untenanted and forlorn. The owners had far better let them at the lowest rent than suffer them to remain empty, for the boys make targets of the windows, enterprising purveyors for the marine store shops rend off all the lead, thieves purloin every movable fitting, damp swells the window frames and doors, and mustiness makes the whole place wretched to all the senses; into the bargain the district gets a bad name which it probably never loses. Better a poor tenant than a house running to ruin unused. The similitude may well suggest the desirableness of an object and a service to those Christians whose time is wasted in slothful ease. All sorts of mischief happens to unoccupied professors of religion: there is no evil from which they are secure; better would it be for them to accept the lowest occupation for the Lord Jesus, than remain the victims of inaction.[c]

b Dr. Stevens.

"If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiences. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour; nothing is ever to be attained without it."—*Sir J. Reynolds.*

"Troubles spring from idleness, and grievous toils from needless ease."—*Franklin.*

c C. H. Spurgeon.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

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Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab

1—5. (1) **joined affinity**, by marrying his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah.[a] (2) **after years**, at least eight years after the marriage.[b] **killed**, *etc.*, making a right royal feast for his guest. **Ramoth-gilead**, De. iv. 43. Ahab wished to wrest it fr. the king of Syria, and in the enterprise asked Jehosh.'s help. (3) **will be with thee**, for this decision Jehosh. sought no counsel fr. God. (4) **enquire**, as to the success of the enterprise. (5) **prophets**, professedly Jehovah-prophets from the schools.[c]

a 2 Chr. xxi. 6, xxii. 2; 2 Ki. viii. 26.

b "The visit of Jehoshaphat to Ahab fell in Jehosh.'s seventeenth year. (A

The voice of prophecy.—Let us suppose that at the time when

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Ki. xxii. 51)."—*Spk. Com.*

Britain was peopled by half-savage tribes, before the period of the Roman sway, some gifted seer among the Druids had engraven upon a rock a minute prediction of a portion of the future history of the island. Suppose he had declared that it should ere long be conquered by a warrior people from the south; that he should name the Cæsar himself, describe his eagle standard, and all the circumstances of the conquest. Suppose he should portray the Saxon invasion centuries after, the sevenfold division of the monarchy, the Danish inroad, the arrival and victory of the Normans. Our imagined prophet pauses here, or at whatever other precise period you please to suppose; and his next prediction, overleaping a vast undescribed interval, suddenly represents the England of the present day. Now conceive the forefathers of existing England to have studied this wondrous record, and to find, to their amazement, that every one of its predictions was accurately verified; that, as their generations succeeded, they but walked in the traces assigned for them by the prophetic inscription, and all it spoke progressively became fact. Can we suppose that however far away in futurity was the one remaining event, and however impossible to them, at their early stage, to conceive the means by which all the present wonders of this mighty empire could ever be realised, they would permit themselves to doubt its absolute certainty after such overwhelming proofs of the supernatural powers of the seer who guaranteed it? Would they not shape their course as confidently in view of the unquestionable future as in reference to the unquestionable past? It should be thus with regard to the coming judgment.[d]

he is induced to go to Ramoth-gilead

6—11. (6) **besides**, in addition, or yet more. Jehosh. prob. knew of Micaiah, and had not recognised him in the company. (7) **hate him**, as wilful men always hate those who resist them, and tell them the truth. **Micaiah**, not otherwise mentioned.[a] (8) **officers**, marg. *eunuchs*. (9) **on his throne**, portable ones, like chairs of state. **void place**, open space immediately within the gate.[b] (10) **horns of iron**, used as symbols of power.[c] (11) **prophesied so**, *i.e.* in the same encouraging way.

Horns of iron.—Bruce, in describing the head-dress of the governors of Abyssinia, says, "A large broad fillet was bound upon their forehead, and hid behind their head. In the middle of this was a horn, or conical piece of silver gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle extinguishers. This is called *kirn*, and is only worn in reviews or parades after victory." Such, it may be supposed, were the horns of iron which Zedekiah made for himself, when he presumed in the name of Jehovah to flatter his prince with the promise of victory. May not the crescent which is now used as the Turkish symbol have this origin? for the oldest records bear testimony that this device was used by that people; which suggestion may be corroborated by the extremity of the waxing or waning moon being her horn.[d]—*Human power.*—Man conquers the sea and its storms. He climbs the heavens, and searches out the mysteries of the stars. He harnesses the lightning. He bids the rocks dissolve, and summons the secret atoms to give up their names and laws. He subdues the face of the world, and compels the forces of the waters, and the fires, to be his servants. He makes laws, hurls empires down upon empires in the fields of war,

c Ahab seems to have imitated heathen custom in thus getting the 400 together.

True religion derives its pedigree from heaven, and constantly moves toward heaven again. It is a beam from God, as "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above," etc.

"Ah, curst ambition! to thy lures we owe all the great ills that mortals bear below."—*Tickell.*

d Archer Butler.

a 1 Ki. xxii. 8—28.

b "The *meidan*, or 'open place,' is large, and usually of an irregular form. It is used for military displays, for the game of the jerid, or javelin, on horseback, and as a camping ground for camels and other beasts of burden; hence it is never paved." — *Van Lennep.*

c De. xxxiii. 17; Ps. xliv. 5; Da. viii. 4.

d Bagster's Comp. Bib.

"O cursed ambition—thou devouring bird, how dost thou

speaks words that cannot die, sings to distant realms and peoples across vast ages of time; in a word, he executes all that is included in history, showing his tremendous energy in almost everything that stirs the silence, and changes the conditions of the world. Everything is transformed by him, even up to the stars. Not all the winds and storms and earthquakes and seas and seasons of the world have done so much to revolutionise the world as he has done since the day he came forth upon it, and received, as he is most truly declared to have done, dominion over it.[e]

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from the field of honesty pick every grain of profit or delight, and mock the reaper's toil!"—*Havard.*

e Dr. Bushnell.

12—17. (12) **the messenger,** *v.* 8. (13) **my God saith,** indic. the faithfulness and fearlessness of the true prophet. (14) **and prosper,** he does not say, "*Ye shall prosper.*" He only says, if you prosper they shall be delivered, etc. An illus. of the equivocal character of an oracle. (15) **adjure,** Jos. vi. 26. **but the truth,** Ahab saw he was making game of him. (16) **no master,** gently hinting that the expedition would end in Ahab's death. (17) **but evil,** or *for evil:* attributing the prophet's words to personal enmity.[a]

Micaiah's adverse prediction

a Comp. 1 Ki. xxii. 11—18.

Not afraid to be poor.—After Dr. Gill had written against a gentleman whose publications he considered erroneous, he was waited on by some of his friends, who endeavoured to dissuade him from persevering; and, among other things, they intimated to him that he might lose the subscriptions of some wealthy persons. "Do not tell me of losing," said the doctor; "I value nothing in comparison with the Gospel. I am not afraid to be poor."—*A faithful minister.*—"Soon after I began to preach the Gospel at Everton, the churches in the neighbourhood were deserted, and mine so overcrowded, that the squire, who did not like strangers,' he said, 'and hated to be incommoded,' joined with the offended parsons; and soon after, a complaint having been made against me. I was summoned before the bishop. 'Well, Berridge,' said his lordship, 'did I institute you to Eaton or Potten? Why do you go preaching out of your own parish?' 'My lord,' said I, 'I make no claim to the livings of those parishes. 'Tis true I was once at Eaton, and, finding a few poor people assembled, I admonished them to repent of their sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls. At that very moment, my lord, there were five or six clergymen out of their own parishes, and enjoying themselves on the Eaton bowling green.' 'I tell you,' retorted his lordship, 'that if you continue preaching where you have no right, you will very likely be sent to Huntingdon jail.' 'I have no more regard, my lord, for a jail than other folks,' rejoined I; 'but I had rather go *there* with a good conscience, than be at liberty without one.' His lordship looked very hard at me. 'Poor fellow!' said he, 'you are beside yourself: and in a few months you will either be better or worse.' 'My lord,' said I, 'you may make yourself quite happy in this business: for if I should be better, you suppose I shall desist of my own accord; and if worse, you need not send me to Huntingdon jail, for I shall be better accommodated in Bedlam!' His lordship then pathetically entreated me, as one who had been and wished to continue my friend, not to embitter the remaining portion of his days by any squabbles with my brother clergymen, but to go home to my parish: and so long as I kept within it, I should be at liberty to do what I liked there. 'As to your con-

"To a mind resolved and wise, there is an impotence in misery, which makes me smile when all its shafts are in me."—*Young.*

An old farmer said of a minister whose sermons were much wanting in point, "Ah, yes; he's a good man, I dare say, but *he will rake with the teeth upward.*"

"Go teach the eagle, when in azure heaven he upward darts to seize his madden'd prey, shiv'ring through the death circle of its fear, to pause and let it 'scape, and thou may'st win man to forego the sparkling round of power when it floats airily within his grasp."—*Talfourd*

"Wild ambition loves to slide, not stand; and fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land."—*Dryden.*

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science,' said his lordship, 'you know that preaching out of your parish is contrary to the canons of the Church.' 'There is one canon, my lord,' said I, 'which I dare not disobey, and that says, Go preach the Gospel to *every creature!*'" [b]

[b] *John Berridge.*

Micaiah continues his reproof

[a] 1 Ki. xxii. 20.
[b] "Prefer rendering, 'the spirit corresponding to the requirements in the preceding question of Jehovah.'" — *Spk. Com.*
Comp. **1 Thes.** ii. 12.
[c] "The details of a vision cannot safely be pressed any more than the details of a parable." — *Spk. Com.*

18—22. (18) **therefore hear,** in fuller, plainer terms the Divine will. **the Lord,** *etc.*, comp. Job i. 6, 7; Is. vi. 1—4. (19) **entice,** persuade, deceive.[a] (20) **a spirit,** Heb. *the spirit;* poss. Satan.[b] **wherewith,** or in what way. (21) **lying spirit,** so that when he consults them he may be led to rush upon his ruin.[c] (22) **evil,** as his prophet had spoken for Him, *v.* 16.

Faithful and trusty.—Faithful signifies full of faith or fidelity; trusty signifies fit or worthy to be trusted. Faithful respects the principle altogether; it is suited to all relations and stations, public and private; trusty includes not only the principle, but the mental qualifications in general; it applies to those in whom particular trust is to be placed. It is the part of a Christian to be faithful to all his engagements; it is a particular excellence in a servant to be trusty. Faithful is applied in the improper sense to an unconscious agent; trusty may be applied with equal propriety to things as to persons. We may speak of a faithful saying, or a faithful picture; a trusty sword, or a trusty weapon. —*A sphere for labour.*—Every town and village has its "High Street;" and Edinburgh is eminently fashionable both in its high and low developments. High Street here is long, populous, varied, and active, even to boisterous activity. On a Saturday night it is crowded; and never did we see so many drunkards revelling in their besotted folly in one thoroughfare as on one of these evenings. Whitechapel and St. Giles's compare favourably on Saturday night with the reeking depravity of this street of aristocratic Edinburgh. Here we are, however, on the middle arch of George the Fourth's bridge, surveying the Cowgate, which is spanned by this structure. It was here that Dr. Guthrie —fresh, as he tells us in one of his miscellaneous contributions to wholesome Christian literature, from a parish with "daisied pastures, hedges of hoary thorn, fragrant bean-fields and smiling gardens, decent peasants, stalwart lads and blooming lasses, and the grand blue sea rolling its lines of snowy breakers on the shore"—was sorrowfully ruminating, when he had arrived to minister in a new parish that contrasted so unfavourably with his previous sphere of Christian labour. "A beautiful field, sir, a very fine field of operation," exclaimed a gentleman by his side. Turning round, he found it was Dr. Chalmers, and his heart was strengthened in the Lord.[d]

Zedekiah smites Micaiah

[a] "In contrast with this one sublime prophet is the vulgar advocate of the popular view of the moment, Zedekiah. He is the first of a type that we meet frequently

23—28. (23) **smote,** prob. with his shoe; a most insulting thing to do.[a] (24) **an inner chamber,** or fr. chamber to chamber; wh. he would do fr. the wrath of Jezebel at what resulted fr. following his counsels. (25) **governor,** whose duty it was to arrange for prisoners. (26) **feed,** *etc.*, treat him with severity.[b] (27) **hearken,** calling the whole assembly to witness to his words. (28) **Ramoth-gilead,** *v.* 2.

Test of faithfulness.—Bishop Hooper was condemned to be burned at Gloucester, in Queen Mary's reign. A gentleman with the view of inducing him to recant, said to him, "Life is sweet, and death is bitter." Hooper replied, "The death to come is more bitter, and the life to come more sweet. I am come hither to

[d] *E. Leach.*

end this life, and suffer death, because I will not gainsay the truth I have here formerly taught you." When brought to the stake, a box, with a pardon from the queen in it, was set before him. The determined martyr cried out, "If you love my soul, away with it! if you love my soul, away with it!"—*Fruits of faithful service.*—"After Mr. Hill had preached for the Missionary Society in Prince's Street Chapel, Devonport, two tall, venerable-looking men, upwards of seventy years of age, appeared at the vestry door. After a short pause they entered, arm in arm, and advanced towards Mr. Hill, when one of them, with some degree of trepidation, inquired, 'Sir, will you permit two old sinners to have the honour to shake you by the hand?' He replied, with some reserve, 'Yes, sir;' when one of the gentlemen took his hand, kissed it, bathed it with tears, and said, 'Sir, do you remember preaching on the spot where this chapel now stands, fifty years ago?' 'Yes, I do,' was the reply. The old man then proceeded to say, 'Oh, sir, never can the dear friend who has hold of my arm, or myself, forget that sermon. We were then two careless young men in his Majesty's dockyard, posting to destruction as fast as time and sin could convey us thither. Having heard that a young clergyman was to preach out of doors, we determined to go and have some fun. We loaded our pockets with stones, intending to pelt you; but, sir, when you arrived, our courage failed, and as soon as you engaged in prayer, we were so deeply impressed, that we looked at each other and trembled. When you named your text, and began to speak, the word came with power to our hearts; the tears rolled down our cheeks; we put our hands into our pockets, and dropped the stones one after another, until they were all gone: for God had taken away the stone from our hearts. When the service was over, we retired; but our hearts were too full to speak, until we came near to our lodgings, when my friend at my elbow said, "John, this will not do; we are both wrong.—good night." This was all he could utter; he retired to his apartment,—I to mine; but neither of us dared to go to bed, lest we should awake in hell. From that time, sir, we humbly hope we were converted to God, who, of His infinite mercy, has kept us in His ways to the present moment. We thought sir, if you would permit us, after the lapse of half a hundred years, to have the pleasure of shaking you by the hand before we go home, it would be the greatest honour that could be conferred on us.' Mr. Hill was deeply affected,—the tears rolled down his venerable cheeks in quick succession; he fell on the necks of the old men, quite in the patriarchal style; and there you might have seen them, locked in each other's arms, weeping tears of holy joy and gratitude before the Father of mercies. The writer is aware he cannot do justice to the scene, though he feels, at this distance of time, something like celestial pleasure in recording what he witnessed."[c]

29–34. (29) **disguise,** indic. his fear of the truth of Micaiah's words. **thy robes,** royal robes so as to appear the king. This Jehosh. might do in safety, as no prophecy threatened him. (30) **small or great,** *i.e.* with soldiers or officers. All were to make effort to secure the person of the king. (31) **cried out,** calling his men around him. **moved . . him,** bec. they found he was not the man they wanted; see next *v.* (32)

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afterwards,—one filled with a spirit of prophecy, not fr. any false doctrine, but from narrow and interested motives, leaning on the feeble tauguries, the most accidental tokens."—*Stanley.*

b Comp. Ac. xvi. 23, 24.

"The great bell of Moscow is too large to be hung; the question arises, what was the use of making it? Some preachers are so learned that they cannot make themselves understood, or else cannot bring their minds to preach plain Gospel sermons; here, too, the same question might be asked."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

"When I see leaves drop from their trees in the beginning of autumn, just such, think I, is the friendship of the world. Whilst the sap of maintenance lasts, my friends swarm in abundance; but in the winter of my need, they leave me naked. Ho is a happy man that hath a true friend at his need: but he is more truly happy that hath no need of his friend."—*Warwick.*

c T. Jackson.

Ahab and Jehoshaphat exchange robes

a "The 'joints' were prob. pieces of armour wh. attached the

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captains, *etc.*, on whom it specially rested to secure Ahab. (33) **at a venture**, *i.e.* without taking aim; lit. *in his simplicity.* **joints**, parts where the pieces of armour fitted together.[a] (34) **stayed**, *etc.*, nobly keeping the battle up.[b]

Persian archers.—From the accounts we have of the Persians, they appear to be astonishingly expert in the use of the bow, and may be placed in the first rank of archers. Chardin says they shoot with so much accuracy, that they will drive an arrow into the same hole many times successively; and Mr. Tavernier, who was present at a review of the Persian cavalry in 1654, fully confirms the assertion of Chardin. His account of the exhibition is very curious. The king, accompanied by his principal officers, stood on a portal to one of the royal gardens, whence they viewed the most expert and best looking of the troops, who were ordered to ride singly before the place where the king was stationed. The horsemen rode full speed, and as they passed each man shot an arrow into a turf butt prepared for the occasion. When the review closed, the person whose arrow stood nearest the centre was promised an increase of pay. There was one horseman, who, riding in his turn, when he came before the portal, stopped his horse and walked over the plain, contrary to the orders of the general. When he came opposite the butt, he refused to shoot his arrow, and only raised his arms in the attitude of drawing the bow. The king, enraged to see his discipline so grossly disregarded, ordered his weapons and horse to be immediately taken from him; but one of the generals pleaded his cause, and assured his majesty that he was one of the best soldiers in the army, and had fully proved his skill and courage in the sieges of Erivan and Candahar. The king then commanded the horse and arms to be restored to the cavalier, and he was ordered to take his turn in the review. He accordingly advanced, crying out, "Where would the king have me shoot?" "At the target, where the other horsemen have shot," said one of the generals. The soldier, with a smile, said, "Must I then direct my arrows against a turf? I would rather point them at the enemies of my country; against whom I would sooner discharge three quivers than a single arrow at this turf." He then drew two arrows, and taking one in his mouth, placed the other in his bow, when darting his horse vigorously across the plain till he passed the butt, in the Parthian attitude of shooting behind him, drove an arrow into the centre of the target. Turning about suddenly, he in the same manner shot his second arrow precisely into the hole whence his first arrow had been drawn![c]

breastplate to the helmet, or to the greaves. The arrow entered bet. the breastplate and one of these 'joints.' Breastplates made of metal scales were common both in Egypt and Assyria."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] 1 Ki. xxii. 29—36.

[c] *Percy Anec.*

"It is no small fault to be bad, and seem so: it is a greater fault to seem good, and not to be so. The cloak of dissimulation is a main part of the garment spotted with the flesh: a vice thus covered is worse than a naked offence. There is no devil to the hypocrite."—*Arthur Warwick.*

"Dissimulation is but a faint kind of policy or wisdom; for it asketh a strong wit and a strong heart to know when to tell truth, and to do it: therefore it is the weaker sort of politicians that are the greatest dissemblers."—*Lord Bacon.*

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1037.

Jehoshaphat is reproved by Jehu

1—4. (1) **in peace**, the Syrians not pressing their victory. (2) **Jehu**, 1 Ki. xvi. 1—4, 7, 12.[a] **went out**, so taking the very moment of his return from Ahab. **ungodly**, *i.e.* Ahab. **wrath**, *etc.*, good men's sins do not pass unnoticed. (3) **good things**, ch. xvii. 4—6. **groves**, or images.[b] **prepared thine heart**, art rightly disposed, though thou hast acted injudiciously. (4) **went out again**, for a second effort at the religious reformation of the people.

[a] 2 Chr. xx. 34.

[b] 2 Chr. xvii. 6.

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.* v. 2. *J. Milner*, iii 422

Jehoshaphat's connection with Ahab reproved.—I. What is that intimacy with the ungodly which God forbids? 1. An alliance with them; 2. A conformity with them; 3. An unnecessary association with them. II. Why is it so displeasing to Him? 1. On account of the state of mind it implies; 2. On account of its pernicious tendency; 3. On account of its opposition to His revealed will.[c]

The spirit of religion.—It must be understood that "being religious" is not a work apart by itself, but a spirit of faith and righteousness flowing out from the centre of a regenerate heart into all the enjoyments and intercourse of the world. Not merely the preacher in the pulpit, and the saint on his knees, may do the work of religion; but the mechanic who smites the hammer and drives the wheel; the artist seeking to realise his pure idea of the beautiful; the mother in the gentle offices of home; the statesman in the forlorn hope of liberty and justice; and the philosopher, whose thought treads reverently among the splendid mysteries of the universe.[d]

5—11. (5) **judges,**[a] possibly he removed such as were negligent or unfaithful, and appointed new ones. (6) **in the judgment,** when you give a judgment. (7) **iniquity,** in its sense of inequality, or undue leaning to one side.[b] (8) **judgment of the Lord,** difficulties arising in connection with Div. worship. **controversies,** ordinary civil cases. (9) **perfect heart,** not perfunctorily, but in the true spirit of service. (10) **blood and blood,** Ex. xxi. 12—23. (11) **chief priests,** or high priest. **matters of the Lord,** as *v.* 8. **king's matters,** as controversies, *v.* 8.

Peter the Great.—Peter the Great having been informed that his subjects suffered much from lawsuits, owing to the avarice and dishonesty of those lawyers employed, who, while any money was to be got from their clients, delayed terminating the process, he determined to remedy the grievance. He fixed the number of lawyers, and apportioning them a sufficient salary, ordered that they should officiate for all his subjects gratis, and that whoever should be found to accept a bribe or fee, or should be dilatory in forwarding a process, should have the knout, and be condemned to perpetual banishment. Though this law may seem severe, yet it was found beneficial, and in a few years the lawyers were as remarkable for their integrity as they had previously been for their gross bribery and corruption.[c]

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"A man in the right, with God on his side, is in the majority, though he be alone; for God is multitudinous above all the nations of the earth."—*Beecher.*

We usually take three meals a day for the body. Would it not be as well to give the soul as many meals?

d Dr. Chapin.

Jehoshaphat's reforms

a De. xvi. 18; 1 Chr. xxiii. 4.

b De. x. 17, xvi. 19.

vv. 5—7. *Dr. J Jeffery*, ii. 65.

v. 6. *E. Young*, i. 182.

vv. 6, 7. *W. Leighton house*, 391.

v. 7. *Dr. J. Weedon*, 167

v. 11. *Dr. R. Monkhouse*, iii. 79.

c Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

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1—4. (1) **Ammonites,** Heb. *Mehaammonim;* the Mehunim, who appear to have lived near Mount Seir, on the south of the Moabites.[a] (2) **beyond the sea,** the Dead Sea. **Syria,** should be *Edom.* **Hazazon-tamar,** Ge. xiv. 7.[b] (3) **to seek the Lord,** the only right thing to do. **a fast,**[c] so that seeking the Lord might be national. (4) **they came,** to Jerusalem.

Prayer the best means of defeating invasion.—In considering this account of Jehoshaphat, we shall point out—I. His feelings on the approach of an invasion. He feared—1. The calamities that were coming on the nation; 2. The displeasure of God in them. Corresponding with his feelings were—II. The means he

Jehoshaphat proclaims a fast

a Wordsworth.

Spk. Com. suggests *Maonites.*

b 1 Sa. xxiii. 29.

c Ju. xx. 26; 1 Sa. vii. 6.

See *J. Alting, Op.* 2, pars. 2, 107.

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d C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 3. *J. Bolton, Threefold Treat.; J. Penn*, i. 352.

Whosoever denies that, spite of all hindrances from individual wickedness, right shall not ultimately prevail, impugns not alone human justice, but the justice of God.

"Seek God upon thy way, and He will come to thee."—*Schiller.*

e Dr. Goulburn.

Jehoshaphat's prayer

a Spk. Com.

b Is. xli. 8; Jas. ii. 23.

c 1 Ki. viii. 22–53.

Christ's righteousness, pleaded in the court of justice, is our full and final discharge.

It lightens the stroke to draw near to Him who handles the rod.

took to defeat it. 1. He set himself to seek the Lord; 2. This was the most effectual means he could employ. Infer.:—(1) What reason have we for thankfulness on account of the appointment of this fast; (2) Of what signal use to a nation are the praying few; (3) How much may they do for their country, who are ready to think themselves incapable of rendering it any essential service.[d]

Affinity with God in prayer.—It is a great truth, reader, that if we desire to gain anything from the Most High, our minds must be set, more or less, to the same key as His. If two harps be strung to the same key, but not otherwise, when one of them is struck, the other gives a responsive sound. There must be some secret affinity in nature between the lightning of heaven and the conductor which draws it down—between the steel and the magnet which attracts it—between the light substances and the chafed glass or sealing wax, towards which they leap up and cling. And in grace there must be a secret affinity between God and the soul (this affinity itself being the effect of grace) before the soul can lay hold of God's will, and draw out a blessing from Him, yea, draw God Himself into it. This affinity stands in love.[e]

5—9. (5) **before the new court,** "one renovated either by Jehosh. or his father and now known as the *new court*,"[a] the large outer court is prob. meant. (6) **art not thou,** this questioning form naturally expresses the king's fears. (7) **thy friend,** El-Khalil.[b] (8) **sanctuary,** ref. is to Sol.'s temple. (9) **if when evil,** *etc.*, comp. Sol.'s great prayer.[c]

Prayer.—A good man, whose occupation was that of a day labourer, had for his companions an ungodly neighbour and a little boy. It was frequently his practice to speak to his neighbour on the things of religion. One day, in conversation on prayer, his companion told him that he had often said his prayers, but got no good by it; to which the other gave this reply, "Take my advice, and follow it for one year. Fall down, and on your bended knees say, every morning and evening, for one year, 'Lord, teach me to pray; God be merciful to me a sinner;' and I'll engage you'll get good by it." This advice, which was given to the man, was blessed to the boy, who was observed to be always attentive to the conversation which passed. He, for one year, persevered in following that line of conduct, which the man disregarded, entered the Sunday school, that he might learn to read his Bible, and became a member of a Christian church.

10—13. (10) **and Mount Seir,** comp. *v.* 1. **wouldst not,** *etc.*, De. ii. 9. (11) **reward us,** evil for good. (12) **no might,** sense of helplessness to set them wholly leaning on Div. strength. **our eyes,** the attitude of dependence, prayer, and expectancy.[a] (13) **with . . children,** this indicates such fear as led the people to seek shelter in the fortified city.

a Ps. xxv. 15, cxli. 8.

v. 8. *S. Bowes, B.A.*

v. 12. *Dr. W. Draper*, i. 238.

v. 13. *Dr. W. Paley*, ii. 180.

b Bowes.

"There is no man's case so dangerous as his whom Satan hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him pure

Sinful cares (*v.* 12).—Cares are sinful when—I. They hinder or exclude sober devotion. II. When we let our minds run upon them at unseasonable times, as on the Sabbath, Isa. lviii. 13. III. When they deprive us of the proper enjoyment of what we have. IV. When they lead us into unlawful or doubtful ways to obtain our desires. Gen. xxx. 3.[b]—*Jehoshaphat's prayer* (*v.* 12).—From this prayer we learn—I. That the demands made upon us by great afflictions and troubles are utterly beyond the power of

self-help. II. That spiritual hostilities and temptations cannot be repelled by human sagacity and strength. III. That a consciousness of our own weakness is one of the most indispensable requisites to all spiritual success. IV. That in all straits and difficulties, temporal or spiritual, it is the path of safety and of peace to have a fixed eye on the Divine all-sufficiency. This includes—1. A conviction of God's presence; 2. A spirit of importunate prayer; 3. A lively expectation of deliverance; 4. An acquiescence in the Divine will.

Extemporaneous prayer.—When Archbishop Secker was laid on his dying-bed, his friend Mr. Talbot came to see him. He felt it was their last meeting together, so he said, "You will pray with me, Talbot, before you go away?" Mr. Talbot rose, and went to look for a prayer-book. "That is not what I want now," said the dying prelate: "kneel down by me, and pray for me in the way I know you are used to do." So the good man knelt by his friend's bedside, and poured out his soul for him before his heavenly Father in such words as his heart dictated.

14—19. (14) **came the spirit,** ch. xv. 1. (15) **but God's,** *i.e.* you have put the matter into God's hands, and He will wholly undertake it for you. (16) **cliff of Ziz,** "the pass wh. leads northwards, by an ascent fr. Engedi to Jerusalem, issuing a little below Tekoa. **brook,** or wady. **wilderness of Jeruel,** the flat district adjoining the desert of Tekoa, now called *El-Husasah.*[a] (17) **stand,** *etc.*, do nothing; watch the Lord's doings.[b] (18) **face to the ground,** the extreme attitude of truthful worship. (19) **Korhites,** a family of the Kohathites specially distinguished for musical ability.[d]

Victory the gift of God (*v.* 15).—I. Let us therefore address our tribute of praise to God for every success in war. II. Let us remember that war, however it may, in answer to a nation's prayers, be crowned with victory, must be considered as a judgment. Learn—That we are all soldiers of Christ. That we have to be diligent at our posts. That if we succeed, it is God who giveth us the victory.[e]

The way of success.—The men whom I have seen succeed best in life have always been cheerful and hopeful men, who went about their business with a smile on their faces, and took the changes and chances of their mortal life like men facing rough and smooth alike as it came, and so found the truth of the old proverb, that "Good times, and bad times, and all times pass over." Of all men, perhaps, who have lived in our days, the most truly successful was the great Duke of Wellington; and one thing, I believe, which helped him most to become great, was that he was so wonderfully free from vain fretting and complaining, free from useless regrets about the past, from useless anxieties for the future. Though for years he had on his shoulders a responsibility which might have well broken down the spirit of any man, though the lives of thousands of brave men, and the welfare of great kingdoms—ay, humanly speaking, the fate of all Europe—depended on his using his wisdom in the right place, and one mistake might have brought ruin and shame on him and on tens of thousands; yet no man ever saw him anxious, confused, terrified. Though for many years he was much tried and hampered, and unjustly and foolishly kept from doing his work as he knew it ought to be done, yet when

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and blameless in the sight of God. . . . The best things we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned. How then can we do anything meritorious, and worthy to be rewarded?"—*Hooker.*

"Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; and watching without prayer is presumption."—*Jay.*

the message of Jahaziel

a Robinson.

b Ex. xiv. 13, 14; Num. xiv. 9.

c Ex. iv. 31.

d 1 Chr. vi. 22.

e J. B. Smith, M.A.

That eloquent statesmen, Henry Clay, had just propounded a political scheme to an associate. "It will ruin your prospects for the presidency," suggested his friend. "Is it right?" said Mr. Clay. "Yes," was the answer. Mr. Clay continued, "I would rather be right than president."

"In extemporary prayer, what men most admire God least regardeth—namely, the volubility of the tongue. Oh! it is the heart keeping time and tone with the voice which God listeneth unto. Otherwise the nimblest tongue tires, and loudest voice grows dumb, before it comes half-way up to heaven."

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Only the conformity of the words with the mind, mounted in heavenly thoughts, is acceptable to God." —*Thomas Fuller.*

f C. Kingsley.

Jehoshaphat's exhortation

a Comp. 1 Chr. xvi. 29; Ps. xxix. 2.

b "The word translated *ambushments* means powers, or angels commissioned by God to bring about the destruction of the army." — *Davidson.*

"The sense seems to be that God turned against the invaders the ambush wh. they had set against Israel." — *Wordsworth.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 20. *Col. R. Tichbourn, A Cluster of Grapes; W. B. Cadogan,* 2; *Dr. J. Gill,* i. 70.

"Knaves will thrive when honest plainness knows not how to live." —*Shirley.*

d Carlyle.

the valley of blessing

a Comp. Ne. xii. 43.

"Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws Charity with her lovely train; Repentance with her holy sorrow; Faith with her elevated eye; Hope with her

the time came for work his head was always clear, his spirit was always ready, and therefore he succeeded in the most marvellous way. Solomon says, "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Now, the great duke had learnt in most things to rule his spirit, and therefore he was able not only to take cities, but to do better still, to deliver cities—ay, and whole countries — out of the hand of armies far stronger humanly speaking, than his own.*f*

20—25. (20) **wilderness of Tekoa,** the direction in wh. to meet the enemy. This was the act that tested their faith. **stood,** in the gate, watching them pass out. (21) **consulted,** so that there might be unity in the work of praise. **beauty of holiness,** this is the spirit in wh. they should praise, not a name for the God whom they praised.*a* (22) **ambushments,***b* *liers in wait;* angels, not mortal men. It was a miraculous overthrow. (23) **stood up,** *etc.*, this *v.* may poss. explain the ambushments. (24) **dead bodies,** by the time they arrived the conflict was over. (25) **three days,** indic. that the quantity was immense.

Faith the means of national and personal prosperity.—It is our intention to show—I. What is implied in the faith here recommended. 1. A renunciation of all false confidences; 2. a simple affiance in God. Let us consider—II. Its influence on our welfare. It has a favourable aspect on—1. Our national prosperity; 2. Our personal welfare. We would further address you on this subject—(1) As members of the community; (2) As members of the Church.*c*

The present aspect of religion.—Religion in most countries—more or less in every country—is no longer what it was, and should be: a thousand-voiced psalm from the heart of man to his invisible Father, the fountain of all goodness, beauty, truth, and revealed in every revelation of these; but for the most part a wise, prudential feeling, grounded on mere calculation: a matter, as all others now are, of expediency and utility; whereby some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. Thus religion, too, is profit, a working for wages; not reverence, but vulgar hope or fear. Many we know — very many, we hope — are still religious in a far different sense; were it not so, our case were too desperate: but to witness that such is the temper of the times, we take any calm observant man, who agrees or disagrees in our feeling on the matter, and ask him whether our view of it is not in general well founded.*d*

26—30. (26) **Berachah,** *blessing, Wady Bereikut,* 2 m. W. of Tekoa. (27) **forefront,** as leader. (28) **psalteries,** *etc.*, as 1 Chr. xiii. 8. They went out in faith, they came back in joy and triumph.*a* (29) **fear,** *etc.*, wh. brought further blessing to the land, confirming its security from attack. (30) **quiet,** fr. other invasions.

Asking a blessing.—Learn to ask God's blessing on little things as well as great. There is nothing which it is right for us to do, but it is also right to ask that God would bless it; and, indeed, there is nothing so little but the frown of God can convert it into the most sad calamity, or His smile exalt it into a most memorable mercy; and there is nothing we can do, but

its complexion for weal or woe depends entirely on what the Lord will make it. It is said of Matthew Henry, that no journey was undertaken, nor any subject or course of sermons entered upon, no book committed to the press, nor any trouble apprehended or felt, without a particular application to the mercy seat for direction, assistance, and success. . . . It is recorded of Cornelius Winter, that he seldom opened a book, even on general subjects, without a moment's prayer. The late Bishop Heber, on each new incident of his history, or on the eve of any undertaking, used to compose a brief Latin prayer, imploring special help and guidance. . . . A late physician, of great celebrity, used to ascribe much of his success to three maxims of his father's, the last and best of which was "Always pray for your patients." [b]

31—37. (31) **mother's name,** given to show that he was a genuine born Israelite. (32) **departed not,** wilfully, or wholly. Slips he made, but no falls. (33) **high places were not,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xvii. 6, ref. may be to high places at wh. Jehovah worship was offered. (34) **Jehu,** *see* ch. xix. 2. **is mentioned,** 1 Ki. xvi. 1. (35) **join himself,**[a] in a commercial alliance. needful to Ahaziah, as securing the trade of the Red Sea. (36) **Tarshish,** prob. Tartessus in Spain : or poss. a place in India. **Ezion-gaber,** 1 Ki. ix. 26. (37) **Mareshah,** Jos. xv. 44. **broken,** wrecked.

Degrees in backsliding.—The following may serve as an admonitory list of the steps taken in the downward path :—**1.** Neglect of secret prayer, Job xv. 4. 2. Disregard of the Bible, Jer. vi. 19; Hosea iv. 6. 3. Forsaking the means of grace, Neh. x. 39 ; He. x. 25. 4. Worldly-mindedness, 2 Tim. iv. 10 ; 1 John ii. 16. 5. Levity in conversation, Eph. v. 4 ; 2 Peter iii. 11. 6. A quarrelsome spirit. Isaiah xxix. 21 ; 1 Cor. iii. 3. 7. Dwelling on the faults of others, Matt. vii. 3—5. 8. Readiness to take offence, Prov. xiv. 17—19. 9. A murmuring, repining spirit, 1 Cor. x. 10 ; Philip. ii. 14. 10. A critical hearing of the Word, 1 Cor. iii. 4 ; 2 Tim. iv. 3. 11. Covetousness, Luke xii. 15 ; Col. iii. 5. 12. Light thoughts of sin, 1 Kings xvi. 41 ; Mat. xxii. 5. 13. Intemperance, Prov. xxiii. 29—32. 14. Love of pre-eminence, Prov. xvi. 18 ; 3 John 9, 10. 15. Indulgence in secret sin, Num. xxxii. 23 ; Eccles. xii. 14. 16. Falling into outward sin, Prov. xiv. 4 ; Hosea iv. 17. 17. Into scoffing and infidelity, 2 Peter iii. 3. 18. Persecuting the righteous, Acts vii. 52. 19. An awful death, Prov. xiv. 32. 20. Final perdition, Matt. xxv. 41.[a]

Gradual backsliding.—We warn you against little concessions, little acquiescences, little indulgences, little conformities. Each may only destroy the millionth part of the velocity ; but this destruction of a millionth has only to be perpetually repeated, and the planet's march is arrested, and its lustre is quenched. If vital religion be driven out of the soul, it will be as the Canaanites were to be driven before the Israelites, "by little and little." [c]

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grasped anchor; Benevolence with her opened hand; Zeal looking far and wide to bless; and Humility looking at home."—*Hannah More.*

vv. 27—30. *E. Nares,* 383.

vv. 28—30. *N. Brady,* ii. 227.

b D. Hamilton.

end of the reign of Jehoshaphat

a 1 Ki. xxii. 44—49.

b Dr. Haven.

"I want the Lamb's fountain every day, His intercession every moment; and would not give a groat for the broadest fig leaves, or the brightest human rags to cover me. A robe I must have of one whole piece, broad as the law, spotless as the light, and richer than an angel ever wore — the robe of Jesus."—*Berridge.*

Effects of backsliding. — "Loss of character; loss of comfort; loss of usefulness; and, as long as any remain in this state, a loss of a well-grounded hope of future happiness."—*C. Buck.*

c H. Melvill.

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CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Jehoram begins his reign

1—7. (1) **Jehoram,** comp. 2 Ki. viii. 16. He had been associated with his father in government for two years before his father's death. (2) **Azariah,** 2 sons appear with the same name, in Heb., however, one is spelt *Azariahu*. (3) **fenced cities,** of wh. they were governors :[a] so they were not dependent on, and would not trouble, the reigning king. (4) **slew .. sword,** an act so violent as to indic. the advice of Jezebel.[b] **of the princes,** suspected as belonging to the party. **Israel,** not the northern kingdom here, but put for Judah. (5) **eight years,** only six as sole king. (6) **Israel,** here distinctly the northern kingdom. (7) **not destroy,**[c] *i.e.* at once. This ver. explains God's patience with Jehoram.

The cruelty of tyranny.—

> Our emperor is a tyrant, fear'd and hated;
> I scarce remember in his reign one day
> Pass guiltless o'er his execrable head :
> He thinks the sun is lost that sees not blood,
> When none is shed, we count it holiday ;
> We who are most in favour, cannot call
> This our own.[d]

revolt of the Edomites

8—11. (8) **Edomites,** Ge. xxxvi. 9, 43.[a] (9) **by night,** so effecting a surprise. (10) **so the Edomites,** should be *yet*. Comp. 2 Ki. viii. 22. The Edomites were more successful in a second attempt.[b] **Libnah,** Jos. x. 29. **because,** *etc.*, these national losses came as a punishment for idolatry, etc. (11) **made high places,** for the unlawful Baal worship. **fornication,** a common metaphor, signifying idolatry, or spiritual unfaithfulness.

An idolater's hope.—The Rev. Mr. Francis, an American Christian missionary, stationed in India, states that in December, 1832, he met with an aged Brahmin, and conversed with him in reference to futurity. On inquiring his age, the Brahmin told him he had lived in this world about eighty years. In reply to a second inquiry, he admittted that he had committed many sins. The missionary then said : "As it is evident, from your advanced age, that you have but a short time to remain on earth, do you know how your sins are to be pardoned, and what will be your state after death?" He replied : "My hope is in the Ganges." On the missionary expressing his sorrow at the delusion he cherished, and stating the general arguments which prove the absurdity of such a system, he looked very serious : and when the question was a second time pressed upon him, he confessed, that if the Ganges could not take away his sins, he knew not what could.

Elijah's letter to Jehoram

12—15. (12) **a writing,** the word used is not either of those for *a letter*.[a] **fr. Elijah** some think this should be *Elisha*.[b] Apparently Elijah was translated before this. Some think he lived unto the reign of Jehoram.[c] And some deny the truth of the narrative here.[d] (13) **of Israel,** who were with extreme measures dishonouring Jehovah.[e] (14) **plague,** or *stroke*, *v.* 17. (15) **disease,** *etc.*, kind of consumption. "He had no bowels of compassion for his own flesh and blood," *v.* 4.

Comp. 2 Chr. xi. 23.

b "Similar tragedies have been sadly frequent in Eastern courts, where the heir of the crown looks upon his brothers as his most formidable enemies, and is therefore tempted to secure his power by their death."—*Jamieson.*

c 2 Sa. vii. 12—14; 1 Ki. xi. 36; 2 Ki. viii. 19; Ps. cxxxii. 11.

d Dryden.

a 1 Ki. xi. 14; 2 Ki. viii. 21; 1 Chr. xviii. 12, 13; 2 Chr. xxv. 19.

b Ge. xxvii. 40.

The heaviest load of guilt, if there is true and heartfelt repentance, cannot lay more weight upon the true and only "Foundation" than it will bear.

"The miserable hath no other medicine, but only hope."—*Shakespeare.*

"Where there is no hope, there can be no endeavour, or caution."—*Johnson.*

a "The document in question is not called a letter (*iggereth*,

Retribution.—A minister in a small seaport town in Scotland, several years ago, furnished an account of a man, who for many years was master of a coasting vessel, and an inhabitant of that place. In his younger days he made a profession of religion: and, among the small but respectable body to which he belonged, he was deemed an eminent Christian. He afterwards became a deist!—nay, a professed atheist, and made the existence of the Deity and a future state the subjects of his ridicule and profane mockery. For horrid swearing and lewdness he had perhaps few equals in Scotland. One night, in a public-house, when swearing awfully, in a rage, he was summoned into eternity in a moment, by the rupture of a blood-vessel.

16—20. (16) **Arabians,** tribes lying south of the Philistines. (17) **brake into it,**[a] with a sudden incursion for plunder, in the manner of these tribes. **his wives,** except *Athaliah.* **Jehoahaz,** *Ahaziah* or *Azariah.*[b] (18) **incurable disease,** severe dysentery. (19) **no burning,** bec. of the sins he had committed, the calamities of his reign, and perhaps also bec. of the humiliating nature of his death. (20) **without being desired,** *i.e.* without being regretted.

Tombs of the kings.—"We descend into a trench sunk in the rocky level, and divided by a wall, consisting of the rock itself, and squared into shape, from a large court similarly sunk below the level, and of course open to the sky. The passage through the wall of rock is by an arch. The great court is about ninety feet square, and on its west side is a portico about twenty-five feet wide, excavated in its rocky wall. The façade was formerly supported by two pillars. The style of the entablature is what is called Roman Doric, and the entire front, when perfect, must have been very rich in effect, from the profusion of carved foliage and fruit which it exhibits, portions of which may still be traced. The entrance is in the left-hand corner, by a very low door. The first room is an antechamber, square and plain. The two rooms south of this entrance contain small niches or crypts for sepulture, running into the rock. The general character of these chambers is the same. The apartment west of the antechamber, which is entered by a door in the centre of the wall, is the most extensive of any. A panelled stone door was formerly inserted by its stone tenon, at the corner, into the groove which is hollowed out in the angle of the doorway. All the doors around, except the centre one, lead into similar crypts to those in the other apartment. Through the centre arch is a passage into a low vaulted room, from which there is no issue, and which was probably the resting-place of honour in these sepulchral chambers. The sarcophagi, beautifully sculptured with wreaths of fruit and flowers, thrown from their niches, lie broken and tenantless on the rocky floor. As the whole of the apartments lie south of the centre of the portico, it has been supposed that others, with a concealed entrance, may exist on its northern side; but all attempts to discover them have hitherto been in vain. From the extent of this noble sepulchre we should be disposed to accept the tradition of its being the burial-place of the kings of Judah; though the learned Robinson seems rather to consider it as that of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, who resided at Jerusalem, and built a very splendid sepulchre."[c]

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or *sepher*), but simply a writing (*micetab*)."—*Wordsworth.*

b Jamieson.

c Luther, Bertheau.

d Davidson.

e Ex. xxxiv. 12, 15; De. xxxi. 16; 1 Ki. xvi. 33.

end of the reign of Jehoram

a Or *wasted it.*

b 2 Chr. xxii. 6.

"To 'desire' is only to look *forward* with longing now; the word has lost the sense of regret, or looking back upon the lost but still loved. This it once possessed in common with *desiderium* and *desiderare*, from which more remotely, and *désirer* from which more immediately we derive it."—*Trench's Glossary.*

Death is like a postman, who knocks alike at the door of rich and poor; and brings to this man wedding-cards, and to his neighbour a funeral envelope; to one the pleasant news that his richly-laden vessel has arrived in port, and to another tidings of disaster and bankruptcy.

"Black ambition stains a public cause."—*Pope.*

c Bartlett, Scripture Sites and Scenes.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

B.C. 1017.

Ahaziah is elected king

1—4. (1) **Ahaziah,**[a] called *Jehoahaz*, ch. xxi. 17. **had slain,** so they could not be ransomed. (2) **forty and two,** this cannot be, as his father was only forty when he died.[b] Prob. it should read 22. **Athaliah,** ch. xxi. 6. **daughter,** or granddaughter. (3) **he also,** as well as his father. **counsellor,** in her position as queen-mother. (4) **they,** *i.e.* Athaliah, and Jehoram, her brother.

The danger of following evil counsel.—The history before me will naturally lead me to point out—I. The influence of evil counsel. Let us mark this matter more distinctly—1. In the case before us; 2. In our own case. But let me faithfully warn you of—II. The danger of following it. In two ways will a compliance with evil counsel operate to a man's destruction. 1. By the habits which it will induce; 2. By the judgments which it will entail. Address—(1) Those who are exerting their influence against the Lord; (2) Those who yield to such influence.[c]

Evil companions.—Evil companions are the devil's agents, whom he sends abroad into the world to debauch virtue and to advance his kingdom; and by these ambassadors he effects more than he could do in his own person. His own shape and appearing would fright rather than allure; and, well as men like sin, did they see the father of it, they would not be very fond of being his children; but acting in the children of disobedience, which are of the same flesh and blood with us, and creatures of the same shape, and from which we have no aversion, but rather, sometimes, a great affection to, the bait is easily swallowed. These are his factors, and by these he draws men into eternal darkness. By these he picks up all the good seed that is sown in us, and infuses bad qualities into our better part. These laugh men into destruction and damn them in kindness. These fawn men into misery, and tickle them into an eternity of torments. These turn religion into jest and make the precepts of the Gospel matter of raillery. These are true devils, that delight in the murder of souls, and sinking into the bottomless pit, pull down their adherents with them.[d]

Azariah's visit to the son of Ahab

5—9. (5) **went with,**[a] comp. 2 Ki. viii. 28, 29. (6) **Jezreel,**[b] the country residence of the kings of Israel. (7) **of God,** as Div. judgment on his sin. **against Jehu,** *i.e.* to meet him. **Jehu,** 1 Ki. xix. 16; 2 Ki. ix. 6—10. (8) **and found,** 2 Ki. x. 12—14. (9) **sought,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. ix. 27—29. **brought him to Jehu,** this may be regarded as supplementing the account given in Kings.[c]

The desire of power.—The desire of power may exist in many, but its gratification is limited to a few;—he who fails may become a discontented misanthrope; and he who succeeds may be a scourge to his species. The desire of superiority or of praise may be misdirected in the same manner, leading to insolent triumph on the one hand, and envy on the other. Even the thirst for knowledge may be abused, and many are placed in circumstances in which it cannot be gratified. But the desire of moral improvement commends itself to every class of society, and

[a] "Jehoram, apparently, had not designated Ahaziah as his successor. Hence he had to receive his investiture from the people." —*Spk. Com.*

[b] 2 Chr. xxi. 5, 20. "The words of the original are 'Ahaziah was the son of 42 years,' and his years are traced from the dynasty of Omri, on account of his connection with it on his mother's side." — *Lightfoot.*

"Some make this 42 to be the age of his mother, Athaliah; he was the son of a mother who was that age."—*Mat. Henry.*

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

[d] *A. Horneck.*

[a] Comp. rebuke of this union with idolatrous Israel, 2 Chr. xix. 2, xx. 37.

[b] Jos. xix. 18.

[c] "Ahaziah fled first to the garden-house, and escaped to Samaria; but was here, where he had hid himself, taken by Jehu's men who pursued him, brought to Jehu, who was still

its object is attainable by all. In proportion to its intensity and its steadiness, it tends to make the possessor both a happier and a better man, and to render him the instrument of diffusing happiness and usefulness to all who come within the reach of his influence. If he be in a superior station, these results will be felt more extensively: if he be in a humble sphere, they may be more limited, but their tendency is equally to elevate the character of man.[d]

10—12. (10) **seed royal,** every person who might possibly be made king.[a] (11) **Jehoshabeath,** called *Jehosheba*, 2 Ki. xi. 2. **bedchamber,** or bed-closet.[b] (12) **in the house of God,** Jehoiada residing in one of the apartments of buildings in the outer temple-wall.

The bedchamber.—The bedchamber in the temple, in which Jehosheba hid Joash in the days of Athaliah, does not seem to mean a lodging-chamber, but a chamber used as a repository for beds. I am indebted to Sir John Chardin for this thought, which seems to be a just one; for the original words signify a chamber of beds, and the expression differs from that which is used when a lodging-chamber is meant. He supposes, then, that place is meant where beds are kept: for in the East, and particularly in Persia and Turkey, beds are not raised from the ground with bedposts, a canopy, and curtains; people lie on the ground. In the evening they spread out a mattress or two of cotton, very light, etc. Of these they have several laid up in great houses, until they may have occasion to use them, and have a room on purpose for them. In a chamber of beds, the room used for the laying up beds, it seems Joash was secreted. Understand it how you will, it appears that people were lodged in the temple; and if any lodged there, it is to be supposed at particular times there were many, especially the relations and friends of the high priest. Here it may be right to consult Neh. xiii. 4, 5. In the room in which beds were deposited, not a common bedchamber, it seems the young prince lay concealed. Chardin complains the Vulgar Latin translation did not rightly understand the story; nor have others represented the intention of the sacred writer perfectly, if he is to be understood after this manner.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—5. (1) **strengthened himself,** expression for beginning to take action.[a] "Prepared his measures for a great stroke.[b] **covenant,** for the overthrow of Athaliah's tyranny. (2) **gathered the Levites,** *etc.*, prob. he chose the time of one of the festivals, so as to disarm suspicion. (3) **all the congregation,** regarded as acting thro' these leaders and representatives. **Lord hath said,** 2 Sa. viii. 12, 13. (4) **ye,** addressed to the Levites only. **entering,** for your weekly course.[c] **porters,** or watchmen. **doors,** Heb. thresholds. (5) **king's house,** or "the porch of the palace." **gate of the foundation,** poss. the gate *Sur*.[d]

Caution, wariness, circumspection.—Caution is the effect of fear, wariness of danger, circumspection of experience and reflection. The cautious man reckons on contingencies, he

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near, or in Jezreel, and at his command slain at the hill Gur, beside Ibleam, in his chariot; *i.e.* mortally wounded with an arrow, so that he, again fleeing, expired at Megiddo."—*Keil.*

d Abercrombie.

Athaliah

a "What hindered that she should herself seize the dropped reins of government, and guide the fierce steeds of ruin which threatened to whirl her to destruction? There have been those who deemed themselves compelled to leap into a throne to save themselves from utter ruin."—*Kitto.*

b "In the portion of the ordinary apartment lying nearest the door, and several inches lower than the raised square room which is the divan, a large cupboard, or closet, is built in the wall, where the bedding of the night occupants of the chamber is stored away"—*Van Lennep.*

c Harmer.

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Jehoiada, the priest

a Ge. xlviii. 2; 2 Chr. xii. 1, xvii. 1, xxi. 4.

b Stanley.

c 1 Chr. ix. 25.

d 2 Ki. xi. 6.

"More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes, when it obeys the

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watchful eye of caution."—*Thomson.*

"It is a good thing to learn caution by the misfortunes of others."—*Publius Syrius.*

"High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect" — *Shakespeare.*

[e] *G. Crabb.*

guards against the evils that may be, by pausing before he acts; the wary man looks for the danger which he suspects to be impending, and seeks to avoid it: the circumspect man weighs and deliberates: he looks around and calculates on possibilities and probabilities; he seeks to attain his ends by the safest means. A tradesman must be cautious in his dealings with all men; he must be wary in his intercourse with designing men: he must be circumspect when transacting business of particular importance and intricacy. The traveller must be cautious when going a road not familiar to him; he must be wary when passing over slippery and dangerous places; he must be circumspect when going through obscure and winding passages. A person ought to be cautious not to give offence; he ought to be wary not to entangle himself in ruinous litigations; he ought to be circumspect not to engage in what is above his abilities to complete. It is necessary to be cautious not to disclose our sentiments too freely before strangers; to be wary in one's speech before busybodies and calumniators; to be circumspect whenever we speak on public matters, respecting either politics or religion.[e]

Jehoiada proclaims Joash

[a] Comp. reference of this duty to the guard, 2 Ki. xi. 8, 11.

[b] 1 Chr. xxiv., xxv.

[c] Some think that the orig. word, as its derivation warrants, may signify here the *regalia*, esp. the bracelet. "Others think that a roll, containing a copy of the law, was placed in the king's hands, wh. he held as a sceptre or truncheon." — *Jamieson.*

Pardon is sometimes granted to the criminal at the place of execution, but so rarely, that it cannot be depended upon: no more can deathbed repentance and death-bed pardon.

[d] *So. Duwell.*

6—11. (6) **watch of the Lord,** see that no Baal worshippers forced their way in. (7) **the Levites,** those not engaged as indicated in *vv.* 4, 5.[a] (8) **all Judah,** as described in *vv.* 2, 3. **to go out,** the usual attendants were doubled by retaining those who were just completing their week's course.[b] (9) **spears,** *etc.*, thus arming them within the temple courts to avoid exciting any suspicion. (10) **all the people,** those joining in his enterprise; not the promiscuous worshippers. (11) **testimony,**[c] De. xvii. 18.

The dangers of delay.—

Shun delays, they breed remorse:
Take thy time, while time is lent thee;
Creeping snails have weakest force;
Fly their fault, lest thou repent thee;
Good is best when sooner wrought,
Ling'ring labours come to nought.

Hoist up sail while gale doth last—
Tide and wind stay no man's pleasure!
Seek not time when time is past—
Sober speed is wisdom's leisure:
After-wits are dearly bought:
Let thy fore-wit guide thy thought.

Time wears all his locks before;
Take thou hold upon his forehead;
When he flees, he turns no more,
And behind his scalp is naked.
Works adjourn'd have many stays;
Long demurs breed new delays.[d]

Athaliah is slain

[a] Comp. 1 Ki. i. 41.

vv. 12, 13. *S. C. Wilks*, 411.

"True dispatch

12—15. (12) **praising,** *etc.*, the shout of the people's acceptance of the new king revealed what had occurred.[a] (13) **looked,** prob. rushing across the valley to see what was the matter. She knew the importance of *prompt action.* (14) **forth of the ranges,** the limits of the temple grounds. **followeth her,** with intent to defend her. (15) **horse gate,** 2 Ki. xi. 16.

Disinterestedness.—

Mark but my fall, and that which ruined me.
Cromwell, I charge thee fling away ambition.
Love thyself last. Cherish the hearts that hate thee.
Be just, and fear not;
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's and truth's; then, if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr.[b]

The fatal flower.—"Travellers who visit the Falls of Niagara are directed to a spot in the margin of the precipice over the boiling current below, where a gay young lady a few years since lost her life. She was delighted with the wonders of the unrivalled scene, and ambitious to pluck a flower from a cliff where no human hand had before ventured, as a memorial of the cataract and her own daring. She leaned over the verge, and caught a glimpse of the surging waters far down the battlement of rocks, while fear for a moment darkened her excited mind. But there hung the lovely blossom upon which her heart was fixed; and she leaned, in a delirium of intense desire and anticipation, over the brink. Her arm was outstretched to grasp the beautiful form which charmed her fancy; the turf yielded to the pressure of her light feet, and with a shriek she descended, like a falling star, to the rocky shore, and was borne away gasping in death." A life sacrificed for a flower! How like the case of many who, grasping at sin's fatal flower, sacrifice the soul!

16—21. (16) **between him,** himself as representing Jehovah.[a] (17) **house of Baal,** temple prob. built by Jehoram. (18) **appointed,** *etc.*, restoring the true order of worship, and effecting an ecclesiastical reformation.[b] (19) **the porters,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 1—19. (20) **high gate,** or upper gate. (21) **quiet,**[c] it was a bloodless revolution, save in the case of Athaliah; quiet also from her tyrannies and idolatries.

Porters.—The entrance of the inner chamber of a Buddhist temple is usually low and narrow; and on each side stands a dreadful-looking fellow formed of clay, and above the size of the human form, with a huge serpent in his hand, seemingly ready to lash with it whoever enters; but intended chiefly, I believe, to admonish such as come unprepared. They are styled *moora-kārayo*, the usual word for guards or sentinels.[d]

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is a rich thing. For time is the measure of business, as money is of wares, and and business is bought at a dear hand where there is small dispatch."—*Bacon.*

"The slightest emotion of disinterested kindness that passes through the mind improves and refreshes that mind, producing generous thought and noble feeling. We should cherish kind wishes, for a time may come when we may be enabled to put them in practice."—*Miss Mitford.*

b Shakespeare.

Jehoiada's reforms

a 2 Ki. xi. 17.

b Comp. 1 Chr. xxiii., xxiv., **xxv.**

c So ended the troubled scenes of the first Sabbath of wh. any detailed account is preserved to us in the sacred records."—*Stanley.*

v. 19. *W. Morice, Esq.*, on the Lord's Supper, 681.

d Callaway.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

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1—5. (1) **of Beersheba,** Ge. xxi. 14. (2) **all the days,** *etc.*, prob. Jehoiada lived to guide the king's counsels from 23 to 30 years. (3) **two wives,** anxious to secure a succession to the throne of Judah. Choosing only *two* showed his desire to limit the licence which kings then permitted themselves.[a] (4) **to repair,**[b] Heb. *renew*, 2 Ki. xii. 4—16. (5) **money,** free-will offerings. **hastened it not,** showed no earnestness in the matter.

The life and character of Joash.—We propose—I. To take a brief review of his history. 1. During the life of Jehoiada; 2. After Jehoiada's decease. Let us proceed to.—II. Make some reflections on his character. From his character toward the close of his life, we observe, how awful is the state of those who,

Joash begins to reign

a 1 Ki. xi. 3; 2 Chr. xi. 21, xiii. 21.

b "Its treasures had been given away piecemeal to invaders, even by the most devout of the kings, and had been plundered twice over by the

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Egyptians and Arabs. Its very foundations had been injured by the agents of Athaliah in removing its stones for her own temple."—*Stanley.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Ibid.

e Dr. J. Edmonds.

v. 2. *J. Milner,* iii. 439.

v. 3. *H. W. Sullivan,* i. 52. *Signs of backsliding.*—"Indifference to prayer and self-examination; trifling or unprofitable conversation; neglect of public ordinances; shunning the people of God; associating with the world; thinking lightly of sin; neglect of the Bible; and often gross immorality."—*C. Buck.*

f J. A. Collier.

after hopeful beginnings, turn aside from the paths of piety and virtue. From his history in a collective view we observe how necessary Divine grace is to produce any radical change of heart and life. Address—(1) Those to whom the care of young persons is entrusted. (2) Those who are yet under the authority or instruction of others.[c]—*Connection between diligence and prosperity.*—Respecting the prosperity of our souls, the text calls us to notice two things. I. Its dependence on God. II. Its connection with our diligence. From this subject we may derive matter—1. For reproof; 2. For encouragement.[d]—*The boy king.*—There are three things in Josiah's history of which I mean to speak. I. His early piety. II. His early usefulness. 1. He destroyed the idols; 2. He repaired the house of God; 3. He restored God's worship. In doing this, he showed four noble qualities: a tender heart; a docile mind; an open hand; a fervent spirit. III. His early death. Why take away this good king so soon? God is wiser than we are. His death was strange, but for him happy. Learn:—Be good, and do good; and then, even if you die young, you will die beloved and grieved for by the good on earth; while God Himself will take you to heaven, and give you joy and glory there.[e]—*Little crowns and how to win them.*—What boy has not sometimes wished that he might become a king, and live in a splendid palace, all shining with gold and gems? I am going to tell you how you may all wear crowns, if you will only take the pains to win them. One of these crowns is self-government. II. Another crown is wisdom. III. Another is obedience to God. IV. Another crown, bright and beautiful, as if it had come straight from heaven, is love. V. I must tell you of one more crown, and it is as bright as all the others can make it melted into one: the crown of glory that fadeth not away.[f]

Jehoiada institutes the treasury

a Comp. 2 Ki. xii. 4.

b 2 Chr. xxi. 17.

"Poss. *some* may be taken here in the sense of, *servants of, followers of.*"—*Wordsworth.*

c 2 Ki. xii. 9.

Draw near to God. To those who have not learned submission will mean, Cry aloud, and spare not.

6—10. (6) **chief,** *v.* 11. **why,** *etc.*, as head of the Levites, Jehoiada was called to account for their negligence. **collection,** Ex. xxx. 12—16.[a] (7) **sons of Athaliah,** *i.e.* Ahaziah and his elder brothers.[b] (8) **chest,**[c] with a hole in the lid. (9) **proclamation,** Heb. *a voice,* a message carrying the king's authority. (10) **made an end,** given all they could, and all had given who would.

Treasure in religion.—In the "green-room" at Dresden, where for centuries the Saxon princes have gathered their gems and treasures, until they have become worth millions of dollars, may be seen a silver egg, a present to one of the Saxon queens, which, when you touch a spring, opens, and reveals a golden yolk. Within this is hid a chicken, whose wing, being pressed, also flies open, disclosing a splendid gold crown studded with jewels. Another secret spring being touched, hidden in the centre is found a magnificent diamond ring. The treasures of religion are not discovered at the first view; but when laid open are found to be greater than any king ever possessed. Their value will appear greater and greater to all eternity.

collections for the service of religion

Col. A. J. Edgerton, while com-

11—14. (11) **king's office,** indic. that the king put the matter in the ordering of his civil officers, as the Levites had failed in duty. **king's . . officer,** acting as auditors. (12) **did the work,** or as we should say, *contracted* for it. (13) **the work was perfected,** the Heb. has a striking figure: "*the*

healing went up upon the work." **state**, proper condition and grandeur. (14) **vessels to minister**, refurnishing the temple with utensils, etc.

The reopening of the temple by king Jehoash.—In my text there are two things to be noticed. I. The reformation made. But if we rejoice at the reformation made, our joy is damped by what is spoken of. II. The term of its continuance. It was only during the days of Jehoiada that this reformation continued. And who shall say how long the work that has been begun among you shall continue?[a]

Advantage of sincere worship.—In an early period of the ministry of the Rev. John Wesley, he visited Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where his father had formerly been minister, but found the people greatly opposed to what they considered his new notions. He tells us, in his journal, that many persons were convinced of the importance of the truths he delivered from the tombstone of his father, some of whom were conveyed in a wagon to a neigbouring justice of the peace, to answer for the heresy with which they were charged. Mr. Wesley rode over also. When the magistrate asked what these persons had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgotten. At length, one of them said:—"Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and, besides, they pray from morning to night." He asked, "But have they done anything besides?" "Yes," said an old man; "an't please your worship, they have convarted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue; and now she is as quiet as a lamb." "Carry them back, carry them back," replied the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

15—19. (15) **full of days**, his age was very unusual in those times; there is, however, no good reason for challenging the number of years given to him in the text.[a] (16) **in the city**, an honour permitted only to kings.[b] (17) **the princes of Judah**, who wished for some toleration of idolatry; they did not ask its actual introduction, but some relaxation of the restraints put upon idol worship. **hearkened**, being weak-natured, and having lost the prop on which he had leaned. (18) **groves**,[c] or images. (19) **prophets**, to warn them of danger, as *v.* 20.

A long day and a late sunset.—As we read the panegyric of this king, let us select, among others, three features of his character which stand out with special prominence. I. His faith. This the history illustrates. II. His boldness and intrepidity. III. His disinterestedness.[d]

Hopeful old age.—Mr. Venn, conversing with a stranger, was thus addressed; "Sir, I think you are on the wrong side of fifty?" "On the wrong side of fifty!" answered Mr. Venn. "No, sir; I am on the right side of fifty." "Surely," the other replied, "you must be turned fifty?" "Yes, sir," added Mr. Venn; "but I am on the right side of fifty; for, every year I live, I am nearer my crown of glory."

20—22. (20) **Zechariah**, who succeeded his father in the priesthood. **stood above**, prob. at the top of the steps leading to the priest's court, so in full hearing of the people. **prosper**, De. xxxviii. 1—14. (21) **conspired**, *etc.*, raising a public

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manding a brigade in Louisiana, in which sickness and death were extremely prevalent, was requested to prohibit religious meetings, as "religion tended to depress the spirits of the men," and to injure their health. He caused a careful examination to be made, and learned that, while two-fifths of the whole regiment had died, only one-eighth of the Christians in it had died.

a C. Simeon, M.A.

death of Jehoiada

a "His great age may explain his exhibiting a kind of passive character, enduring, for the sake prob. of quiet, evils which he might have been expected to prevent or remove. The high places were not abolished, and priests grossly misappropriated moneys."—*Kitto*

b "Intramural interment was prohibited among the Hebrews in every city but Jerusalem; and there the exception was made only to the royal family, and persons of eminent merit."—*Jamieson.*

c He. x. 38.

d Dr. J. R. Macduff.

Zechariah succeeds Jehoiada

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tumult, as in cases of Naboth and Stephen.[a] (22) **but slew,** *i.e.* permitted his son to be slain. The charge is that he did not check the tumult wh. led to his death. We can hardly think that Joash was the *instigator* of this crime; *see v.* 21, however, in wh. the language appears decisive.[b]

Punishment of ingratitude.—When I consider how the goodness of God is abused and perverted by the greatest part of mankind, I cannot but be of his mind that said, "The greatest miracle in the world is God's patience and bounty to an ungrateful world." Oh! what would God not do for His creature, if thankful, that thus heaps the coals of His mercies upon the heads of His enemies? But think not, sinners, that you shall escape thus. God's mill goes slow, but it grinds small: the more admirable His patience and bounty now is, the more dreadful and insupportable will that fury be which ariseth out of His abused goodness. Nothing blunter than iron; yet, when sharpened, it hath an edge that will cut mortally: nothing smoother than the sea; yet when stirred into a tempest, nothing rageth more: nothing so sweet as the patience and goodness of God, and nothing so terrible as His wrath, when it takes fire.[c]

23—27. (23) **end of the year,** or turn of the year; time of such expeditions. **host of Syria came,** fr. Gath, as *see* 2 Ki. xii. 17. **destroyed,** *etc.*,[a] in battle. (24) **small company,** comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 9—15. **judgment,** the Div. judgment. (25) **great diseases,** or in a sore sickness. **on his bed,** where he lay sick. (26) **Zabad,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. xii. 21. (27) **laid upon,** or uttered by prophets against him.[b]

The place of burial.—The burying of persons in their cities is also an Eastern manner of doing them honour. They are in common buried without the walls of their towns, as is apparent from many places of the Old and New Testament. The ancient Jews also were thus buried; but sometimes they bury in their cities, when they do a person a distinguished honour. "Each side of the road," says the author of the *History of the Piratical States of Barbary*, "without the gate, is crowded with sepulchres. Those of the pacha and the deys are built near the gate of Babalonet. They are between ten and twelve feet high, very curiously whitewashed and built in the form of a dome. Hali Dey, as a very eminent mark of distinction, was buried in an enclosed tomb within the city. For forty days successively his tomb was decorated with flowers, and surrounded with people, offering up prayers to God for his soul. This dey was accounted a saint, and a particular favourite of heaven, because he died a natural death; a happiness of which there are few instances since the establishment of the deys in Algiers." No comment is more lively, or more sure, than this, on those that speak of the burying of the kings of the house of David within Jerusalem: those sepulchres, and that of Huldah the prophetess, being the only ones to be found there. But it is not a perfect comment; for it is to be remembered that a peculiar holiness belonged to Jerusalem, as well as the dignity of being the royal city, but no particular sanctity is ascribed to Algiers, by those people that buried Hali Dey there.[c]

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a 1 Ki. xxi. 13; Ac. vii. 57, 58.

b "The prophet's denunciations appeared to Joash treasonable utterances, designed to produce the disasters they announced as impending."—*Spk. Com.*

Matt. xxiii. 35.

v. 22. *Dr. T. Jackson*, xi. 256.

c *Gurnall.*

the Syrian invasion

a "As the authors of the recent apostasy, and the instigators, in all probability, of the proceedings against Zechariah, a special judgment fell on them."—*Spk. Com.*

b 2 Ki. ix. 25; Is. xiii. 1, xv. 1, etc.

v. 25. *Bp. Williams*, 1. "The human race resemble the withering foliage of a wide forest. While the air is calm, we perceive single leaves scattering here and there from the branches; but sometimes a tempest or a whirlwind precipitates thousands in a moment. It is a moderate computation, which supposes a hundred thousand millions to have died since the exit of righteous Abel."—*Foster.*

c *Harmer.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

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Amaziah succeeds Joash

1—4. (1) **Amaziah,** comp. 2 Ki. xiv. 1—3. (2) **not with a perfect heart,** *see vv.* 6—9, 14, and 17. (3) **established,** he felt settled enough to take independent action. **his servants,** ch. xxiv. 26. (4) **not their children,**[a] as De. xxiv. 16. In many cases the families of traitors, etc., were destroyed with them.

The character of Amaziah.—I. What were the instances given of the rectitude of his conduct, and wherein do they show the faultiness of his religion? II. As his history is a short one, notice now the consequences which followed from the heartlessness of his religion. Learn :—Let this history lead to self-scrutiny. Seek not only to do right in the sight of the Lord, but with a perfect heart.[b]

A divided heart.—In every age and country, there are some found with divided hearts on the subject of religion. Such was Hiram, king of Tyre, who, while he blessed the Lord that Solomon was king, and gladly traded with him for some of the materials for building a temple to Jehovah, also contributed one hundred and twenty talents of gold towards its erection ; and yet, in his own country, he dedicated a golden pillar to Jupiter, built the temples of Hercules and Astarte (the Ashtaroth of the Sidonians), and enriched the shrines of the god and goddess by valuable gifts. So there are some people now who appear very religious at times, and yet their hearts go after covetousness, and they are quite at home in the circles of the gay and in the indulgence of sinful pleasures.

a "With a mercy shown apparently for the first time in Hebrew annals, their children were spared." — *Stanley.*

b *T. W. Thompson, B.A.*

v. 2. *R. W. Dibdin,* 89.

v. 4. *S. Smith,* 343, 378.

Some hearts are like stiff soils, which require deep ploughing and much harrowing before they are capable of receiving seed.

5—10. (5) **according . . fathers,** as Nu. ii. 34. **from twenty,** the military age. (6) **hired,** *i.e.* paid for help from the neighbouring country, bec. his army was too reduced to suffice for the protection of the country. (7) **man of God,** prophet. **Israel,** the word used here for the northern kingdom, sometimes it stands for Judah and Benjamin together ; sometimes it is used generally. Here its reference is explained. (8) **if,** *etc.*, apparently ironical.[a] (9) **hundred talents,** as *v.* 6. (10) **anger,** *etc.*, at this sudden and apparently unreasonable dismissal.

Amaziah's alliance with Israel

Amaziah's conflict between duty and interest.—Let us—I. Consider the difficulty started. This is a common difficulty in the minds of men. But it would be no difficulty, if we only viewed things in their true light. II. The difficulty solved—1. In this world : 2. In the world to come. Address those—(1) Who are yet undecided in the course they shall take ; (2) Those who have been enabled to give up all for Christ.[b]—*Amaziah's hundred talents.*—Rehearse the history and character of Amaziah. This text may—I. Suggest a reply to him who objects to the service of God on the ground of the loss that it may entail. 1. Men are not willing to give more than they can help of anything ; 2. Especially of gains that cannot be squared with the religious profession. But God is able to make up to a man all that he gives up for the sake of religion. II. The text is suggestive of a lesson that may be useful to Christian men. God will not allow any

a "Some able critics read 'But if thou wilt go (alone), do be strong for the battle; God shall *not* make thee fall before the enemy.'"—*Ewald, Bertheau.*

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 9. *T. Gisborne,* 151; *Abp. Sumner, Christian Charity,* 191.

"Luther tells us of a nobleman at Vienna, who made a great supper, and in the midst of his mirth belched out this windy and blasphemous speech, 'If God will leave me this world to live and

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servant of His to lose by his devotion to His service. 1. Have we not His word for it? 2. Loss is contrary to the very nature of religion, where all is gain; 3. What seems to be lost may be only capital invested in the best bank; 4. Suppose a Christian to go through life on the principle of acquiring all he can, will he not be a poor man after all, in spite of the hundred talents he may get?

enjoy my pleasure therein for a thousand years then let Him take His heaven to Himself.' This man spake what most men think: the bramble of their bodies reigneth, and fire ariseth out of it to consume the cedar of their souls."—*George Swinnock.*

Unsatisfactory gain.—A gentleman who had made an immense fortune by privateering resolved to build himself a splendid hotel in Paris, rivalling even the imperial palace. It was finished and furnished in the most sumptuous manner. He reserved for himself the pleasure of a brilliant surprise, never having entered the building till all was completed. At last everything was in order. The lights reflected by silver and crystal, blaze brilliantly in every room. The owner enters, but sees not the splendour. He rebukes the servants for not having lighted his palace. Alas! he is not permitted to behold his own proud creation. He was stricken blind in the hour of his triumph. His sight never returned. His furniture was sold under the auctioneer's hammer; and his house was pulled down to make room for some improvement.

"Watch lest prosperity destroy generosity."—*Beecher.*

Amaziah's idolatry

11—16. (11) **valley of salt,**[a] south of Dead Sea. **children of Seir,**[b] the Edomites. (12) **top of the rock,** or height of Selah.[c] (13) **soldiers,** *etc.*, *vv.* 6, 10. **cities of Judah,** they returned to Samaria, and then started out to revenge the insult they thought they had received. **from Samaria,** so destroying the towns and villages southwards. **Beth-horon,** 6 m. N. of Jerusalem. Jos. x. 10. 11. (14) **gods,** *etc.*, the Edomites worshipped the sun under different forms. (15) **why .. hand,** the absurdity of Amaziah's conduct is evident. His victory had proved the vanity of the Edomite gods. (16) **art thou,** *etc.*,[d] lit. "have we made thee a king's counsellor?"

The sin and danger of despising God's counsel.—We shall take occasion to show—I. What is the conduct of the generality in reference to the counsel of God. 1. God still sends His servants to testify against prevailing iniquities, and still his messages are rejected; 2. No less reasonable are the expostulations that God offers to you. That we may the better appreciate such conduct, we now proceed to show—II. In what light it is to be viewed. 1. As a symptom of obduracy; 2. As a ground of dereliction; 3. As a prelude to destruction. Learn—(1) In what manner we should attend to the ordinances of religion; (2) What obligations we owe to God for His long-suffering towards us.[e]

[a] 2 Sa. viii. 13; 2 Ki. xiv. 7; 1 Chr. xviii. 12.

[b] 2 Chr. xx. 10.

[c] "The battle was prob. fought not far fr. Selah (Petra); the captives were marched to Petra itself, and precipitated fr. the steep cliffs in its neighbourhood."—*Spk. Com.*

[d] "Those who were invested with the prophetic character were entitled to counsel kings."—*Jamieson.*

[e] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

Death by hurling.—The Greeks and Romans condemned some of their criminals to be cast down from the top of a rock. In the time of Pitts, the inhabitants of Constantine, a town of Turkey, built on the summit of a great rock, commonly executed their criminals who had been guilty of more atrocious crimes, by casting them headlong from the cliff. This punishment Amaziah, the king of Judah, inflicted on ten thousand Edomites, whom he had taken captive in war: "Other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, and they all were broken in pieces."[f]

Louis XI. strictly charged his servants, that when they saw him ill, they should never dare to name death in his hearing.

[f] *Paxton.*

Amaziah's

17—20. (17) **took advice,** or counsel, but **not fr. God,**

through His prophet. **see . . face,** a challenge to battle.[a] (18) **thistle,** a low shrub, furze-bush: a scornful image of Amaziah. **cedar,** the grand tree of the forest representing the king of Israel. **wild beast,** the Israelite army.[b] (19) **hast smitten,** *vv.* 11, 12. (20) **came of God,** overruled to accomplish the Div. judgment.

Ambition.—Ambition is like the sea which swallows all the rivers and is none the fuller; or like the grave whose insatiable maw for ever craves for the bodies of men. It is not like an amphora, which being full receives no more, but its fulness swells it till a still greater vacuum is formed. In all probability, Napoleon never longed for a sceptre till he had gained the baton, nor dreamed of being emperor of Europe till he had gained the crown of France. Caligula, with the world at his feet, was mad with a longing for the moon, and could he have gained it the imperial lunatic would have coveted the sun. It is in vain to feed a fire which grows the more voracious the more it is supplied with fuel; he who lives to satisfy his ambition has before him the labour of Sisyphus, who rolled up hill an ever-rebounding stone, and the task of the daughters of Danaus, who are condemned for ever to attempt to fill a bottomless vessel with buckets full of holes. Could we know the secret heart-breaks and wearinesses of ambitious men, we should need no Wolsey's voice crying, "I charge thee, fling away ambition," but we should flee from it as from the most accursed blood-sucking vampire which ever uprose from the caverns of hell.[c]

21—24. (21) **they saw,** as Amaziah wished, *v.* 17. **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10. (22) **put to the worse,** defeated in the battle. **fled,** indicating that the defeat was irretrievable. (23) **took Amaziah,** prisoner. **brake down,** *etc.*, comp. the fig. of wild beast treading down the thistle, *v.* 18. (24) **with Obed-edom,** *i.e.* originally entrusted to him.[a] Prob. his family still retained the charge. **the hostages,** princes, or nobles, carried away as security for the quietness of the conquered country.

Greed of conquest.—I dare say Alexander the Great was somewhat staggered in his plans of conquest by Parmenio's way of putting things. "After you have conquered Persia, what will you do?" "Then I shall conquer India." "After you have conquered India, what will you do?" 'Conquer Scythia." "And after you have conquered Scythia, what will you do?" "Sit down and rest." 'Well," said Parmenio to the conqueror, "why not sit down and rest now?"[b]

25—28. (25) **lived after,** 2 Ki. xiv. 17. (26) **first and last,** before and after this defeat and humiliation. (27) **did turn away,** as *v.* 14. **Lachish,** Jos. x. 3. (28) **upon horses,** should read. *upon the horses*, viz. those on which he had fled to Lachish. **city of Judah,** marg. *of David.*[a]

Treachery.—Alexander Menzikoff, who rose to the highest offices of state in Russia during the reign of Peter the Great, was born of parents so excessively poor that they could not afford to have him taught to read and write. After their death he went to Moscow to seek for employment, where he found an asylum with a pastry-cook. He had a very fine voice, and soon became known in that great city from the musical tone of his

B.C. *cir.* 1015.

message to Joash

a 2 Ki xiv. 8—14.

b "Without making a minute application, the parable may be explained, generally, as describing in a striking manner the effects of pride and ambition, towering far beyond their natural sphere, and sure to fall with a sudden and ruinous crash."—*Jamieson.*

"As hoodwinked falcons boldest pierce the skies, th' ambition that is blindest highest flies."—*Colton.*

c Spurgeon.

the meeting of Joash and Amaziah

a 1 Chr. xxvi. 15.

"Ambition is the dropsy of the soul, whose thirst we must not yield to, but control."—*Sedley.*

"There is a glare about wordly success which is very apt to dazzle men's eyes."—*Hare.*

b Dr. Haven.

death and burial of Amaziah

a Comp. 2 Ki. xiv. 20.

"The pleasure of revenge is like the pleasure of eating chalk and coals; a foolish disease made the appetite, and it is entertained with an evil reward;

B.C. *cir.* 1015.

It is like the feeding of a cancer or a wolf; the man is restless until it be done, and when it is, every man sees how infinitely he is removed from satisfaction or felicity."—*Bp. Taylor.*

"Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot that it do singe yourself."—*Shakespeare.*

"He who studieth revenge keepeth his own wounds green."—*Bacon.*

Never make a friend of a casual acquaintance; and never tell your friend the first secret.

B.C. *cir.* 1015.

Uzziah is elected king

a "It is not too much to say that we are indebted to Chronicles for our whole conception of the character of Uzziah, and for nearly our whole knowledge of the events of his reign."—*Spk. Com.*
b 1 Ki. xi. 26.
c 2 Ki. viii. 22.
d "Known as *Jumnia* in Maccabæan history, and was noted as a school of learning after the fall of Jerusalem. The modern name is *Yebna*, on a hill 2 miles fr. the sea, and 11 miles S. of Jaffa."—*Ayre.*
e R. Roberts.

the fame of Uzziah

a 1 Chr. iv. 41; 2 Chr. xx. 1.

cry when vending his master's pastry in the street. His voice also gained him admission into the houses of many noblemen; and he was fortunate enough one day to be in the kitchen of a great lord with whom the emperor was to dine. While Menzikoff was there, the nobleman came into the kitchen, and gave directions about a particular dish, to which he said the emperor was very partial; into this dish he dropped (as he thought unperceived) a powder. Menzikoff observed it, but taking no notice, immediately left the house; and when he saw the emperor's carriage coming, he began to sing very loud. Peter, attracted by his voice, called him, and bought all the pies he had in his basket. He asked some questions of Menzikoff, and was so much pleased with his answers that he commanded him to follow him to the nobleman's house, and wait behind his chair. The servants were surprised at this order; but it proved of the greatest importance to Peter, for when the nobleman pressed his royal guest to take of this favourite dish, his new servant gently pulled him by the sleeve, and begged he would not touch it till he had spoken to him. The emperor immediately withdrew with Menzikoff, who informed his imperial master of his suspicions. The czar returned to the company, and suddenly turning to his host, pressed him to partake of the favourite dish. Terrified at this command, he said, "It did not become the servant to eat before his master." The emperor then offered it to a dog, who greedily devoured its contents, and shortly afterwards expired in the greatest torments!

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—6. (1) **Uzziah,** or *Azariah:*[a] 2 Ki. xiv. 21, 22, xv. 1—7. (2) **Eloth,** or *Elath,* near Ezion-geber;[b] Uzziah *built* in the sense of rebuilt. **restored it,** it had been lost to the Jews in the revolt of Edom fr. Joram.[c] (3, 4) **according . . did,** in the good part of his reign. (5) **Zechariah,** not otherwise known: poss. the writer of the prophetic book to which this name is attached. (6) **Gath,** Jos. xi. 22. **Jabneh,** or *Jabneel,* Jos. xv. 11. **Ashdod,** Jos. xv. 46, 47.

The strength of religion.—Skill and science have wrought wonders. The world stands amazed at their achievements. They have tamed fierce beasts of prey, and brought even the elements of nature into subjection. They have spanned the ocean, annihilated distance, joined remote continents, given life to steam, a tongue to the wire, and a voice to the lightning. But there are passions in the human heart more fierce than beasts of prey; and disturbing forces more tumultuous than nature's stormy winds and tempests, and more difficult of control than the subtle but omnipotent element of electricity. No mere human skill can master these. Christian science, the science taught in the school of Christ, alone can enable you to obtain the mastery here.[e]

7—10. (7) **Gur-baal,** *lit.* the going up of Baal. The site is unknown. **Mehunims,** or Maonites.[a] (8) **gave gifts,** as acknowledgment of dependence. (9) **corner gate,** prob. N.W. of the city.[b] **valley gate,** W. of the city. **turning,** perhaps at the E. of Zion.[c] (10) **towers,** *etc.,* for the defence of his

cattle, and protection of his wells.[d] **plains,** prob. E. of Jordan. **Carmel,** the town in Judah, not the mountain so named. **husbandry,** all connected with agriculture.

Shepherds and husbandmen.—William of Tyre describes a country not far from the Euphrates, as inhabited by Syrian and Armenian Christians, who fed great flocks and herds there, but were in subjection to the Turks, who, though few in number, yet living in strong places among them, kept them under, and received tribute from these poor peasants who inhabited the villages, and employed themselves in country business. I do not know whether this may not give us a truer view of the design of those towers that Uzziah built in the wilderness (mentioned 2 Chr. xxvi. 10) than commentators have done, who have supposed they were conveniences made for sheltering the shepherds from bad weather, or to defend them from the incursions of enemies; for they might rather be designed to keep the nations that pastured there in awe; to prevent their disputing with his servants about wells, and also to induce them quietly to pay that tribute to which the seventh and eighth verses seem to refer.[e]

11—15. (11) **an host,** a strong body of militia, wh. served in companies. **their account,** or muster-roll. (12) **chief of the fathers,** or heads of families: these occupied positions as officers. (13) **an army,**[a] for the number comp. ch. xxv. 5. **the enemy,** the national enemy, whoever he might be. There was at this time special reason to fear Assyria. (14) **habergeons,** coats of mail. **slings,**[b] better as margin, *stones of, or for, slings,* we should say he provided *ammunition* as well as weapons. (15) **engines,** such as the Roman *balista* and *catapulta.* **invented,** the actual invention by Jews seems to be disputed without good reason.[c]

Uzziah's sin.—We have in this text—I. An example of extraordinary prosperity: "He was marvellously helped." 1. The character of Uzziah; 2. His position of power and prosperity; 3. The secret of success. II. His foolish presumption. Nature of his sin—pride, ingratitude, contempt of that truth which permitted the kingly and priestly office to meet only in Christ; known disobedience. III. Solemn retribution. Improvement:—1. Learn the true source of all real prosperity; 2. The peculiar dangers of prosperity; 3. The reason why God keeps His people in a low condition; 4. Sins of presumption are the worst sins; 5. They lead men either to forsake worship or to tamper with it; 6. Sorrow inevitably follows sin.

Engines of war.—There were various engines for casting arrows, darts, and stones of a larger size, of which the most remarkable was the balista, which hurled stones of a size not less than millstones, with so great a violence as to dash whole houses in pieces at a blow. Such were the engines which Uzziah, the king of Judah, planted on the walls and towers of Jerusalem, to defend it against the attacks of an invading force: "And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal." Some of these inventions, however, had been in use long before, for in the reign of David, the battering-ram was employed in the siege of Abel-Bethmaachah: "They cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench; and all the

B.C. 810.

b Ne. iii. 13.

c Ne. iii. 19, 24, 25.

d Thomson. "Wealth is a weak anchor, and glory cannot support a man: this is the law of God, that virtue only is firm, and cannot be shaken by a tempest."—*Pythagoras.* The rich find relations even in the most remote countries; the poor do not find them even in the bosom of their own family.

e Harmer.

Uzziah's army

a "The army consisted of 307,500 picked men, under the command of 2,000 gallant officers, chiefs or heads of father's houses, so that each father's house formed a distinct band."—*Jamieson.*

b Ju. xx. 16; 2 Ki. iii. 25. "In early times the slinger prob. found his own stones; and the supply of them to his soldiers by Uzziah is meant to mark the completeness of his equipment."—*Spk. Com.*

c "It is a remarkably corroborative fact, that Pliny assigns a Syrian origin to these inventions; and in his view, as in ours, Palestine belonged to Syria."—*Kitto.* Habergeon is a translation of two Hebrew words, the one occurring in Job xli. 26, 2 Chr. xxvi 14, Ne. iv.

B.C. 810.

16; and the other Ex. xxviii. 32, xxxix. 23. This latter was linen. *d Paxton.*

Uzziah's sin

a Pr. xvi. 18.

b 2 Ki. xv. 33; 2 Chr. xxvii. 1.

c 1 Ki. xiii. 1; 2 Chr. xxv. 14.

"Elated, according to the Chronicler, by his successes, but certainly in conformity with the precedents of Dav. and Solomon."—*Stanley.*

Comp. Nu. xvi. 1—35, xviii. 1—7.

d See 2 Ki. v. 27.

vv. 16—21. *G. Townsend*, i. 461.

e John.

people that were with Joab battered the wall to throw it down." These powerful engines, invented by Jewish artists, and worked by the skill and vigour of Jewish soldiers, were undoubtedly the prototypes of those which the celebrated nations of Greece and Rome afterward employed with so much success in their sieges.[d]

16—23. (16) **lifted up,** in pride.[a] **to burn incense,** assuming the functions of the priest, perhaps on the ground that he was connected with the priesthood by marriage,[b] perhaps in imitation of his predecessors.[c] (17) **fourscore priests,** prepared to resist the king by force. (18) **go . . sanctuary,** the king had no business even within the doors of the holy place. (19) **leprosy,**[d] a Divine judgment on his self-willed sacrilegious act. (20) **himself hasted,** humbled by this sign of Divine displeasure. (21) **several,** or separate: lit. *the house of liberation.* **was over,** as practically the king. (22, 23) **in the field,** not in the sepulchres themselves, but in the field connected with the sepulchres.

Leprosy.—The leprosy exhibits itself on the surface of the skin, but it infects at the same time the marrow and the bones; so much so that the external joints and parts of the system gradually lose their power, and some of them drop from the body and give it a mutilated and dreadful appearance. From these circumstances there can be no doubt that the disease originates and spreads it ravages internally before it makes its appearance on the external parts of the body.[e]

B.C. 758.

Jotham begins to reign

a Ezek. ix. 2; comp. Je. xx. 2.

b "The long, narrowish, rounded spar, or promontory, wh. intervenes between the central valley of Jerusalem (the Tyropœan) and the Kidron, or valley of Jehoshaphat."—*Grove.*

Habits influence the character pretty much as under currents influence a vessel, and whether they speed us on the way of our wishes or retard our progress, their power is not the less important because imperceptible.

"Vicious habits are so great a stain to human

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) **Jotham,** already for some time regent. **Zadok, the** priest, poss. a descendant of the famous priest of that name. (2) **entered not,** as ch. xxvi. 16—21. **corruptly,** *see* 2 Ki. xv. 32—35. (3) **high gate,** on the north of the temple.[a] **Ophel,** "the name given to the southern swelling of the temple hill."[b] **built much,** as its position was important for the defence of the temple. (4) **mountains,** or the hill country. **castles and towers,** defences to check and harass an invading army.

The verdict of posterity.—The kings and princes of the Oriental regions are often subjected to trial after their decease by their insulted and oppressed people, and punished according to the degree of their delinquency. While the chosen people of God were accustomed to honour in a particular manner the memory of those kings who had reigned over them with justice and clemency, they took care to stamp some mark of posthumous disgrace upon those who had left the world under their disapprobation. The sepulchres of the Jewish kings were at Jerusalem, where, in some appointed receptacle, the remains of their princes were deposited; and from the circumstance of these being the cemetery for successive rulers, it was said when one died and was buried there, that he was gathered to his fathers. But several instances occur in the history of the house of David in which, on various accounts, they were denied the honour of being entombed with their ancestors, and were deposited in some other place in Jerusalem. To mark, perhaps, a greater degree of censure, they were taken to a small distance from Jerusalem, and laid in a private tomb. Uzziah, who had, by his presumptuous

attempt to seize the office of the priesthood, which was reserved by an express law for the house of Aaron, provoked the wrath of heaven, and been punished for his temerity with a loathsome and incurable disease, "was buried with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper." It was, undoubtedly, with a design to make a suitable impression on the mind of the reigning monarch, to guard him against the abuse of his power, and teach him respect for the feelings and sentiments of that people for whose benefit chiefly he was raised to the throne, that such a stigma was fixed upon the dust of his offending predecessors. He was, in this manner, restrained from evil, and excited to good, according as he was fearful of being execrated, or desirous of being honoured after his decease. This public mark of infamy was accordingly put on the conduct of Ahaz: "They buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel."[c]

5—9. (5) **Ammonites,** comp. ch. xxvi. 8. They prob. revolted early in Jotham's reign. **wheat . . barley,** their tribute was paid in kind.[a] (6) **prepared,** or directed his ways.[b] (7) **his wars,** as *v.* 5; comp. 2 Ki. xv. 37. (9) **in the city of David,** *i.e.* in the usual kings' sepulchres. **Ahaz,** *possessor.*

The power of Jotham.—We have in this chapter—I. A history of his reign. It may be taken with 2 Kings xv. 32—38. II. We have also a particular reference to his might. His reign was marked by the buildings which he erected, and by the successful wars. III. But the chief thing to be noted is the secret of his power: "He prepared his ways before the Lord his God." For prepared, the margin would read established, and this implies that he took care to have God's blessing upon him as he proceeded.

Stimulus to achievement.—The leisure of Cæsar was spent in reading the history of Alexander the Great. Upon one occasion his friends found him bathing the book with tears. In deep concern they asked him the reason why he wept. The reply was, "Do you think I have not sufficient cause for concern, when Alexander at my age reigned over so many conquered countries, and I have not one glorious achievement to boast?" So the lives of the Apostles and the early saints may well be studied by us who are Christians, that we may be fired by their exploits to do greater deeds for God; and we should mourn bitterly when we compare our small achievements with His whom we call Master and Lord, and who, before He had attained the years of middle manhood, had performed deeds at which the stoutest frames might quake and the most faithful souls might blush. Comparisons such as these would first stir our gratitude that such an example has been left us, and then fire our valour, that at the end our lives might not be mere empty names, but such as men might gaze upon with admiration, and seek to copy.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1—5. (1) **not that which was right,** comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 1—4. (2) **ways . . Israel,**[c] adopting the symbolic worship instituted by Jeroboam. **for Baalim,** even admitting at last the gross idolatries of Phœnicia. (3) **burnt,** *etc.*,[b] this was a cha-

B.C. 758.

nature, and so odious in themselves, that every person actuated by right reason would avoid them, though he were sure they would be always concealed both from God and man, and had no future punishment entailed upon them." — *Cicero.*

c Paxton.

end of the reign of Jotham

a "The productiveness of the Ammonite country in grain, wh. is here indicated, has been remarked upon as extraordinary by modern travellers." — *Spk. Com.*

b Pr. xxi. 29.

"Holiness consisteth not in a cowl or in a garment of grey. When God purifies the heart by faith, the market is sacred as well as the sanctuary. Neither remaineth there any work or place which is profane." — *Luther.*

Without application the finest talents are worthless; and with it the humblest are valuable.

B.C. 741.

Ahaz ascends the throne and sins

a 1 Ki. xvi 31; 2

B.C. 741.

Ki. i. 2; 2 Chr. xxi. 6 xxii. 3, xxiii. 17.

b "The king seems to have had a mania for foreign religions. The worship of Moloch was now established in the valley of Hinnom, in a spot known by the name of Tophet, close under the walls of Jerus. There the brazen statue of the god was erected, with the furnace within, or at its feet, into which the children were thrown. To this dreadful form of human sacrifice Ahaz gave the highest sanction by the devotion of one or more of his sons."—*Stanley.*

Comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 3.

c Comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 3. 2 Ki. xvi. 5; Is. vii. 1. "There be many that deal with God's word and His religion as doth the butterfly with the sweet flowers; and that is even to dye their wings with them, that they may seem to be of a fair painted colour: these think that holiness consisteth in often and much hearing, how little soever they practise. They can endure the sowing of a Gomer, although they reap but an Ephah." — *T. Timme.*

Pekah and Zichri; Oded, the prophet

a "Pekah appears to have been almost better known by

racteristic feature of the worship of Moloch, the savage god of Ammon. **the heathen**, *i.e.* the Canaanites. (4) **every green tree**, intimating great extremes of superstition. (5) **king of Syria**, *Rezin.*[c] **Damascus**, Ge. xiv. 15. **king of Israel**, *Pekah*, see *v.* 6.

Like son, like father.—In Ahaz we have—I. A son who rebelled against the maxims of his father. Instead of carrying forward the improvements that his father inaugurated, we find that he initiated an altogether new state of things. II. A father who was devoid of natural affection towards his children. "He burnt his children in the fire." III. The wicked sons of good fathers may, one of these days, be fathers themselves; and the evil they have done will be repaid to them again.

A well-ordered life.—Taking a ride one day, Frederick, king of Prussia, surnamed "Old Fritz," espied an old farmer ploughing his acres by the wayside, and cheerily singing his melody. "You are well off," old man," said the king; "does this one acre on which you so industriously labour belong to you?" "No, sir," replied the old farmer, who knew not that it was the king; "I am not so rich as that. I plough by the day for wages." "How much do you get?" asked the king. "Eight groschen a day," said the farmer. "That is not much," returned the king; "can you get along with it?" "Yes, and have something to spare." "How is that?" The farmer smiled, and said, "Well, if I must tell you, two groschen are for myself and wife, with two I pay my old debts, two I lend away, and two I give away for the Lord's sake." "That is a mystery which I cannot solve," remarked the king. "Then I will solve it for you," said the farmer. "I have two old parents at home, who kept me when I was weak and needed help; and, now that they are weak and need help, I keep them. This is my debt, toward which I pay two groschen a day. The third pair of groschen, which I lend away, I spend for my children, that they may receive Christian instruction. This will come handy to me and my wife when we get old. With the last two groschen I maintain two sick sisters, whom I would not be compelled to keep; this I give for the Lord's sake." The king, well pleased with his answer, said, "Bravely spoken, old man. Now I will also give you something to guess. Have you ever seen me before?" "Never," said the farmer. "In less than five minutes you shall see me fifty times, and carry in your pocket fifty of my likenesses." That is a riddle which I cannot unravel," said the farmer. "Then I will do it for you," rejoined the king. Thrusting his hand into his pocket, and counting him fifty brand-new gold pieces into his palm, stamped with his royal likeness, he said to the astonished farmer, who knew not what was coming, "The coin is genuine, for it also comes from our Lord God, and I am His paymaster. I bid you adieu." [A groschen is equivalent to three-halfpence in English money.]

6—10. (6) **son of Remaliah**, 2 Ki. xv. 25.[a] **slew . . day**, these vast numbers of slain indicate a complete rout and panic. (7) **king's son**, or brother, prob. a son of Jotham. **the house**, or palace. **next to the king**,[b] or chief councillor. The loss of so many great officers made this defeat a national calamity. (8) **of their brethren**, this aggravated the distress.[c] (9) **Oded**, ch. xv. 1, 8, poss. the same as *Iddo.*[d] **before the host**, *i.e.* to

meet the returning victors. **reacheth .. heaven,** an extravagant rage, and displeasing to God.[e] (10) **with you, sins,** comp. Christ's teaching, Mat. vii. 1—5.

A sense of sinfulness a good corrective of evil passions (*v.* 10).—I. Urge you to institute the proposed inquiry. 1. In reference to the nation at large; 2. In reference to ourselves in particular. II. Point out the ends for which it should be made. 1. To make us estimate aright the distinguished mercies vouchsafed to us; 2. To moderate our resentments to our offending brethren; 3. To stir us up to imitate the compassion of our God. Learn—(1) To cultivate the knowledge of our own hearts; (2) To keep our minds open to conviction; (3) To follow instantly the convictions of our own minds.[f]

The subscription recanted.—"Bishop Jewel," says Fuller, "being, by the violence of popish inquisitors, assaulted on a sudden to subscribe, he took a pen in his hand, and said, smiling, "Have you a mind to see how well I can write?" and thereupon underwrit their opinions." Jewel, however, by his cowardly compliance, made his foes no fewer without, and one the more, a guilty conscience, within him. His life being waylaid for, with great difficulty he got over into Germany. Having arrived at Frankfort, by the advice of some friends he made a solemn and affecting recantation of his subscription, in a full congregation of English Protestants, on a Sabbath morning, after having preached a most tender penitential sermon. "It was," said he, my abject and cowardly mind and faint heart, that made my weak hand commit this wickedness." He bitterly bewailed his fall; and, with sighs and tears, supplicated forgiveness of the God whose truth he had denied, and of the Church of Christ, which he had so grievously offended. The congregation were melted into tears, and "all embraced him as a brother in Christ, yea, as an angel of God."

11—15. (11) **deliver,** *etc.*, send them back.[a] (12) **of the heads,** the patriarchal chiefs, who formed the king's council. **against,** *etc.*, strongly feeling the shame of having their own brethren in bondage. (13) **hither,** *i.e.* to Samaria. (14) **left .. spoil,** yielded it to them to deal with as they pleased. (15) **by name,** in *v.* 12. **with the spoil,** wh. was, of course, their own national property. **carried,** *etc.*, an indication of tender considerateness.[b] **city of palms,** De. xxxiv. 3.

Misplaced clemency.—The Duke de Montausier, preceptor to the dauphin, son of Louis XIV, is said to have been the only one of that monarch's courtiers who had the courage to speak the truth to him. When Louis one day told him that he had pardoned a man who had killed nineteen persons, after having been pardoned for the first murder he committed, "No, sire," said Montausier, "he killed but one; your majesty killed the nineteen." Montausier was the first projector of the *Delphin Edition of the Classics*. The character of the Misanthrope of Molière is said to have been taken from him.[c]

16—21. (16) **kings of Assyria,** plural for singular.[a] Ref. is to *Tiglath-Pileser*.[b] (17) **Edomites,** taking advantage of the war with Israel, this people cast off their yoke, and made a raid into the country.[c] (18) **Beth-shemesh.** Jos. xv. 10. **Ajalon,** Jos. xix. 42. **Gederoth,** Jos. xv. 41. **Shocho,** 1 Sa.

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his patronymic, *Ben-Remaliah*, than by his own proper name. (Is. vii. 4, 5)."—*Spk. Com.*

b Est. x. 3.

c Ps. lv. 12, 13.

d 2 Chr. ix. 29.

e Ge. iv. 10, 11; Ezr. ix. 6; Ob. 10—16; Re. xviii. 5. See also Le. xxv. 39, 42, 43, 46.

f C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 9. *J. Saurin*, vi. 374; *Abp. Tenison, A Ser.* 1690.

v. 10. *Ed. Broadhurst.* 305.

"He who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays. He who can live in sin, and abide in the ordinary duties of prayer, never prays as he ought. A truly gracious praying frame is utterly inconsistent with the love of, or reserve for, any sin."—*Owen.*

Oded's message

a Ja. ii. 13.

b 2 Ki. vi. 22; Pr. xxv 21, 22; Lu. vi 2 .

"The record of this act of compassion of these Israelites towards the captives of Judah is to be noted as affording a refutation of the allegation of some modern critics, that the writer of the Chron. was swayed by partiality for Judah, and by prejudice against Israel."—*Wordsworth.*

c Percy Anec.

Ahaz seeks aid of Assyria

a The ancient versions have

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the singular number here.

b "Entering Syria at the head of an army, he fell first on Damascus, where Rezin met him in battle, and was defeated and slain. Next he attacked Pekah, and the 2½ transjordanic tribes were carried away captive by the conqueror; and some cities (*e.g.* Megiddo and Dur) on the other side Jordan were taken."—*Rawlinson*, thro' *Wordsworth*.

c For the character of the Edomites, see Am. i. 11; Eze. xxxv. 5; Ob. 10—14.

d Robinson.

e Hos. ii. 3, 10—13.

f C. Simeon, M.A.

g Percy Anec.

continued trespass of Ahaz

a See 2 Ki. xvi. 10—16.

"This may be paralleled by the prayer of Camillus to the Veientine Juno, and the custom of the Romans, related by Macrobius, of enticing the tutelary gods from the cities with wh. they were at war, by supplications and vows."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 22. *William Richardson*, ii. 186. *vv* 24, 25. *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 515.

"Holiness, in the sacred Scriptures, means a hallowed state, a full, entire, and impartial consecration to the service and the

xvii. 1. **Timnah**, Jos. xv. 10. **Gimzo**, *Jimzu*, "a large village in the maritime plain, about 2½ m. fr. Ludd (the ancient Lydda)."[d] (19) **naked**,[e] lit. *he had caused licentiousness in Judah.* (20) **distressed**, *etc.*, by taking heavy tribute, and not rendering the help Ahaz wanted. (21) **took away**, *etc.*, to make up the tribute.

The conduct of Ahaz in his distress.—I. The evil imputed to him. The very evil imputed to Ahaz, of trespassing yet more in his distress, may be committed by us in our troubles. 1. By indifference; 2. By obstinacy; 3. By murmuring; 4. By despondency. That we may be afraid of following the steps of Ahaz, let us consider—II. The stigma fixed upon him. 1. There is an extraordinary force and emphasis in the expression, "This is that king Ahaz;" 2. As the expression is emphatical with regard to him, so it is most instructive with respect to us. Learn—(1) The great design of God in our troubles; (2) Our duty under them.[f]

Empress Catherine's humanity.—The empress Catherine I. of Russia carried humanity to a degree seldom equalled in the history of nations. She had promised that during her reign nobody should be put to death; and she kept her word. She was the first sovereign in modern times that ever showed this regard to the human species. Malefactors were now condemned to serve in the mines and other public works; a regulation not less prudent than humane, since it renders their punishment of some service to the State. In other countries, they only know how to put a malefactor to death with the apparatus of an execution; but are not able to prevent the execution of crimes.[g]

22—29. (22) **that king Ahaz**, comp. expression Nu. xxvi. 9. (23) **gods of Damascus**, Hadad, Rimmon, etc.[a] **all Israel**, here for Judah. (24) **shut up**, so actually seeking to put an end to the worship of Jehovah. **altars in every corner**, as if he would secure the help of all the idol-gods. (25) **several**, or separate. (26) **written**, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xvi. (27) **not into the sepulchres**, as if he were an honoured king.

Ahaz.—I. The character of Ahaz. 1. He was one of those whose iniquity is enhanced by the contempt of spiritual privileges; 2. His downward career was rapidly progressive; 3. He reached the lowest point of human obduracy. II. The illustration he affords of the appalling power of sin. 1. Evil habits strengthen by indulgence; 2. The world increases its power over its votaries as they advance in life; 3. Sinners of mature years lose the perception of religious truth; 4. There is a limit to Divine endurance, and hardened transgressors are often left to perish in their sin.

Charles I. and Strafford.—None of all those who attached themselves to the fortunes of Charles the First was more distinguished than the unfortunate Earl of Strafford. The king was not insensible of his services, and in the warmth of his gratitude, swore, that while he had power to help it, "not a hair of his head should be touched by the Parliament." When, at length, Strafford, by the able support which he gave to the obnoxious measures of the crown, brought upon himself the general indignation of the people: when he was impeached, condemned, and cast into prison, and when it seemed that nothing but his death could appease the popular rage, the earl sent in a

letter to his royal master, in which he magnanimously requested him to forget the promise which he had made him, and to suffer his life to be taken. if by that means the public peace could be secured. Whatever impresssion this noble offer may have made upon Charles, it made none on the heartless courtiers around him, who coolly urged that the full consent of Strafford to his own death, absolved his majesty from every scruple of conscience under which he might labour. The weak and irresolute Charles at length yielded to these importunities, and in breach of the solemn promise which he had made, not to suffer "a hair of his head to be touched," granted a commission to four noblemen to give their royal assent to the bill for the earl's attainder and execution.[b]

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use of God, a definite separation and dedication to His purposes and pleasure, so as that to be otherwise employed would be a desecration—a profanation." — *Dr. Jenkyn.*

b Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

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Hezekiah he begins to reign

1—6. (1) **Hezekiah,** *Jehovah strengthens.* **Zechariah,** poss. the person mentioned Is. viii. 2. (2) **right,** his father's extravagant idolatry seems to have induced in him a revulsion of feeling. (3) **in the first,**[a] *etc.*, at the earliest moment possible. **repair them,**[b] suggesting that Ahaz had damaged the sacred building. (4) **east street,** or eastern court.[c] (5) **the filthiness,** chiefly the relics of idolatry introduced by Ahaz.[d] (6) **turned their backs,** figure for utterly neglecting and despising.

a Abib, or *Nisan,* the month of the passover.

b 2 Ki. xviii. 16.

c "The court of the priests wh. fronted the eastern gate of the temple."—*Jamieson.*

d 2 Ki. xvi. 15.

All for the best.—Bernard Gilpin, accused of heresy before Bishop Bonner, set out for London for trial. His favourite maxim was, "All things are for the best." Upon his journey, he broke his leg. "Is all for the best now?" said a scornful companion. "I still believe so," he replied. So it proved; for, before he was able to resume his journey, Queen Mary died, and, instead of going to London to be burned, he returned home in triumph.

he proposes to restore the worship of God

7—11. (7) **shut up,** ch. xxviii. 24. (8) **to hissing,**[a] *see* Mic. vi. 16. (9) **in captivity,** slavery. If Israel refused to hold their brethren captive, other enemies would not be so particular.[b] (10) **make a covenant,** enter into an agreement; *see* ch. xv. 12. This could be but the renewal of the old national covenant. (11) **negligent,** the king was anxious for immediate attention to the matter. **chosen you,** the family of Levi.[c]

a Comp. 1 Ki. ix. 8; 2 Chr. xxiv. 18; Je. xviii. 16, xix. 8, xxv. 9, 18, xxix. 18.

b War was, doubtless, both the first cause, and the ever-fertile source of slavery, for the theory of the Asiatics has always been, and continues to be, that the conqueror has a right to the life and the property of the conquered; so that the men are mercilessly put to the sword, while the women and children are reduced to

The snares of sin.—Among the first settlers of Brunswick, Me., was Daniel Malcolm, a man of undaunted courage, and an inveterate enemy of the Indians. Early in the spring, he ventured alone into the forest for the purpose of splitting rails, not apprehensive of Indians so early in the season. While engaged in his work, and having opened a log with small wedges about half its length, he was surprised by Indians, who crept up, and secured his musket standing by his side. "Sungurnumby," said the chief, "now me got you; long me want you; you long speak Indian; long time worry him; me have got you now; look up stream to Canada." "Well," said Malcolm, "you have me; but just help me open this log before I go." They all (five in number) agreed. Malcolm prepared a large wooden wedge, carefully drove it, took out his small wedges, and told the Indians to put in their fingers to the partially clefted wood. and help pull it **open.** They did: **he** then suddenly struck out his blunt wedge;

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slavery." — *Van Lennep.*

c Nu. iii. 6, viii. 14, xviii. 2, 6.

the Levites prepare for their duties

a Nu. iii. 33—37, iv. 29—33, vii. 8.

b Nu. iv. 22—28, 38—41, vii. 7, x. 17, xxvi. 57.

c Nu. iii. 30; 1 Chr. xv. 8.

d See titles of Psalms l., lxiii. —lxxxiii.

Comp. 1 Chr. xxv. 1—6; 2 Chr. v. 12

e 1 Chr. xxiii. 27, 28.

f Percy Anec.

the priests cleanse the house of God

a "Beginning with the outer courts,—that of the priests, and that of the people,—the cleansing of these occupied 8 days, after which they set themselves to purify the interior; but as the Levites were not allowed to enter within the walls of the temple, the priests brought all the sweepings out to the porch, where they were received by the Levites, and thrown into the brook Kedron." —*Jamieson.*

b 2 Ki. xvi. 14, 15. *v.* 17. *Dr. J. Fletcher*, iii. 181. Cleanliness is the elegance of the poor.

and the elastic wood instantly closed fast on their fingers, and he secured them all.

12—15. (12) **Kohathites**, Nu. iii. 27—31, iv. 2—15, 34—37. **Merari**, Nu. xxvi. 57.[a] **Gershonites**, Nu. iii. 17—26.[b] (13) **Elizaphan**, Ex. vi. 22.[c] **Asaph**, 1 Chr. vi. 39.[d] (14) **Heman**, 1 Chr. vi. 33. **Jeduthun**, or *Ethan*, 1 Chr. vi. 44. (15) **sanctified themselves**, Ex. xix. 10, 22.[e]

Cleanliness in Russia.—The travelling part of our countrymen never fail to observe the striking contrast which the cleanliness and comfort of England presents to almost every other city or town in the world; but the meanest towns of France and Germany are entitled to the epithets of magnificent, in comparison with the cities of the interior of Russia. Charkow, a town to the south of Moscow, the seat of a university and of a provincial government, is so encumbered with mud and filth that a carriage drawn by two strong horses often sticks fast in the streets. "It would not be possible," says M. Klaproth, "to walk through the dirt on stilts; but fortunately the weather was dry during part of my stay, and the mud became so fixed and compact, that we could walk over it without sinking." He found it necessary, however, to follow the established practice of wearing very wide fur boots, fastened over the knee with straps and buckles. The etiquette is to take off these leg covers when entering a house: but it may happen in this receptacle of wet and filth, as was the case with M. Klaproth, that the boot will stick so fast in the mud, as to oblige the wearer to brake the strap at the knee, and leave the whole behind.[f]

16—19. (16) **inner part**, *i.e.* the temple building; all within the porch; into the temple itself the Levites might not enter.[a] **uncleanness**, so long shut up, dust, etc., had gathered in the holy house. Comp. *v.* 5. (17) **sixteenth day**, taking eight days for each portion of the work. There was a great deal of metal work to clean, etc. (18) **altar**, the great brazen altar before the porch.[b] (19) **cast away**, ch. xxviii. 24.

Cleanliness.—A gentleman advertised for a boy to assist him in his office, and nearly fifty applicants presented themselves to him. Out of the whole number, he, in a short time, selected one and dismissed the rest. "I would like to know," said a friend, "on what ground you selected that boy, who had not a single recommendation." "You are mistaken," said the gentleman, "he had a great many. He wiped his feet when he came in, and closed the door after him, showing that he is careful. He gave up his seat instantly to a lame old man, showing that he is kind and thoughtful. He took off his cap when he came in, and answered my questions promptly and respectfully, showing that he is polite and gentlemanly. He picked up the book which I had purposely laid upon the floor, and replaced it on the table, while all the rest stepped over it or shoved it aside; and he waited quietly for his turn, instead of pushing and crowding, showing he is honest and orderly. When I talked with him I noticed that his clothes were carefully brushed, his hair in nice order, and his teeth as white as milk; and when he wrote his name, I noticed that his finger-nails were clean, instead of being tipped with jet, like that handsome little fellow's in the blue jacket. Don't you call those things letters of recommendation? I do and I would give

more for what I can tell about a boy by using my eyes ten minutes than all the fine letters you can bring me."

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20—26. (20) **early,** the very next morning after receiving information that the cleansing work was done. Setting example of the earnestness in God's service wh. He demanded, *v.* 11. **rulers of the city,** he would not wait to gather the representatives of the nation. (21) **sin offering,**[a] Le. iv. 14. His burnt-offering is spoken of in *vv.* 24, 27. (22) **sprinkled,** Le. viii. 14, 15.[b] (23) **laid their hands,** Le. i. 4, iv. 15, 24. (24) **all Israel,** this term is frequently used for the kingdom of Judah only. Hez. may have intended spiritual service on behalf of all Jehovah's people. (25) **according,** *etc.,* 1 Chr. xxv. 1; 2 Chr. v. 12. (26) **instruments,** 1 Chr. xxiii. 5.

Restoration of the temple-worship by Hezekiah.—There are three things in particular to which we call attention. I. Their numerous sacrifices. II. Their joyful praises. At the close of that solemn service we particularly notice—III. Their reverential obeisance.[c]

Reconciliations, etc.—The word "atonement" occurs only once in the English New Testament, viz. in Rom. v. 11. The Greek word thus rendered occurs again in Rom. xi. 15, and 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, and is there translated "reconciling, reconciliation." In a verbal form it occurs in Rom. v. 10; 1 Cor. viii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 18—20; and with the article *apo* prefixed in Eph. ii. 16, and Col. i. 20, 21; while another form, *diallatto,* is found in Matt. v. 24. What is the radical meaning of these terms? The English word "atonement" expresses, I suppose, the state of "being at one," and "reconciliation" the state of being called "together again;" while *katallage* signifies the state of "being made or becoming wholly another thing." The phrases to "be at one," to "call together again," and to "be made or become wholly another thing," have their separate and distinct shades of meaning.[d]

27—31. (27) **the burnt offering,** either that mentioned *v.* 21, or the regular morning sacrifice. (28) **singers sang,** some anthem specially composed for the occasion. (29) **bowed themselves,** in a solemn act of worship. (30) **with gladness,** *i.e.* praises of a cheerful character: psalms full of thanksgiving and triumph. (31) **thank offering,** Le. vii. 12.

After confirmation.—Consider—I. The act in which you have engaged. 1. A solemn act; 2. A reasonable act; 3. An irrevocable act. II. The duty which yet remains to be performed. The act in which you have this day been engaged must be—1. Continued; 2. Progressive. Application:—(1) To the young we commend the counsel of Hezekiah; (2) To the more advanced we commend his admirable example.[a]

Consecration to God.—An incident in the history of ancient Rome may furnish an illustration of that full liberty and entireness of heart which form the act of acceptable surrender to the Lord. When the people of Collatia were negotiating an unconditional capitulation to the Romans, Egerius, on the part of the Romans, inquired of the ambassadors, "Are the people of Collatia in their own power?" When an affirmative answer was given, it was next inquired, "Do you deliver up yourselves, the people of Collatia, your city, your fields, your waters, your

Hezekiah's sin-offering

a "The bullocks, rams, and lambs were for burnt-offering, the he-goats alone for sin-offering."—*Bertheau.*

"The order of the sacrifice renders this improbable. The sin-offering, wh. was to make the worshipper acceptable in the sight of God, always preceded the burnt-offering, wh. was a representative self-dedication of the worshipper to God's service. Hence it is best to consider that Hez. commenced with an unusually comprehensive sin-offering to atone for sins of the people, etc."—*Spk. Com.*

b He. ix. 21.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Biblical Notes and Queries.

Hezekiah's burnt-offering

v. 30. *Dr. R. Munkhouse,* ii. 77.

v. 31. *D. B. Baker,* 156.

a C. Simeon, M.A.

"Aspirations after the holy—thy only aspiration in which the human soul can be assured that it will never meet with disappointment."—*Maria M'Intosh.*

"Sing aloud old songs, the precious music of the heart!"—*Wordsworth.*

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boundaries, your temples, your utensils, all your property, divine and human, into my power, and the power of the Roman people?" "We surrender all." "And so," said he, "I accept you."[b]

32—36. (32) **burnt offerings,** wh. were wholly devoted to God. In some kinds of sacrifices part of the victim belonged to, and was consumed by, the worshipper. (33) **consecrated things,** the burnt-offerings, the things wholly devoted. (34) **too few,** prob. many had yielded to idolatry, and these would not readily accept the new reforms of Hezekiah.[a] (35) **the fat,** this had to be burnt.[b] (36) **suddenly,** immediately on his coming to the throne. It could not have met with such general acceptance if God had not prepared the minds of the people beforehand.

Atonement for sin.—A certain man on the Malabar coast, having inquired of various devotees and priests, how he might make atonement for his sins, was directed to drive iron spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals; and on these spikes he was enjoined to place his naked feet, and to walk about four hundred and eighty miles. If, through loss of blood or weakness of body, he was obliged to halt, he might wait for healing and strength. He undertook the journey, and while he halted under a large shady tree, where the Gospel was sometimes preached, one of the missionaries came and preached in his hearing from these words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." While he was preaching, the man rose up, threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, "This is what I want;" and he became a lively witness that the blood of Jesus Christ does indeed cleanse from all sin.[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

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1—5. (1) **Ephraim and Manasseh,**[a] the leading tribes of the northern kingdom. (2) **second month,** the proper time was the *first* month.[b] (3) **at that time,** *i.e.* at the proper time. Hez.'s accession to the throne seems to have taken place in the first month of the eccles. year. (4) **the thing pleased,** the arrangement made for the second month. (5) **all Israel,** Hez. must have been on friendly terms with Hoshea,[c] or he would not have permitted Hez.'s messengers thus to pass thro' the country. **of a long time,** or *in full numbers.*

Hezekiah's zeal for the glory of God.—Influence a talent of vast importance; often abused where it exists in the highest degree. I. The efforts he used in the service of God. 1. The object he sought to accomplish was one of the highest importance; 2. The way in which he endeavoured to accomplish his end was peculiarly amiable and praiseworthy. Let us proceed to contemplate— II. The success with which those efforts were attended. 1. Some only mocked his message; 2. Some, however, complied with his exhortations.[d]

Zeal for God.—"I know," says Mr. Fenner, "an old man that used constantly to go to the labourers in the fields, and talk to them about religion as they were reaping and working. He would go to men's shops where he was acquainted, and stir them up to the care of their souls; and, by this means, brought about forty men and women to seek for heaven, who before had

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the order of the service completed

a See 2 Ki. xvi. 10—16

b Le. iii. 16.

If you wish to know Christ as your Saviour you must behold Him, by the eye of faith, hanging on the cross an atoning sacrifice. "Satisfaction is the more specific term; atonement is the reconciliation of God to man by the death of His Son. Satisfaction expresses the relation which the work of Christ sustains to the demands of God's law and justice." —*A. A. Hodge.*

c Whitecross.

Hezekiah proclaims the passover

a "This was before the captivity of the Ten Tribes, wh. did not take place till the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, wh. was the sixth year of Hezekiah. 2 Ki. xviii. 9, 10." —*Wordsworth.*

b Nu. ix. 1—5.

c "Hoshea is described as, though evil in some respects, yet more favourably disposed to religious liberty than any of his predecessors since the separation of the kingdom. This is thought to be the meaning of

no more care that way, than if they had been a company of beasts. Wouldst thou not be glad to do good? Thou wilt never be able to do it, except thou be zealous. Paul had women and sundry private Christians who laboured with him in the Gospel. This—this—beloved, would cause religion to thrive here amongst us!" [e]

6—12. (6) **posts**, runners, couriers.[a] 2 Ki. xi. 4. **remnant of you**, several Assyrian invasions had already been made, and portions of the people had been removed.[b] **kings of Assyria**, Pul and Tiglath-Pileser. (7) **like your brethren**, the 2½ trans-Jordanic tribes; 1 Chr. v. 26. (8) **stiffnecked**, Ex. xxxii. 9.[c] **yield yourselves**, lit. *give the hand* [d] (9) **gracious**, *etc.*, Ex. xxxiv. 6. (10) **Zebulun**, in the extreme north of the country. **laughed**, *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16.[e] (11) **divers**, certain individuals. (12) **one heart**, a united national feeling.

Manasseh's repentance.—From the words before us we see—I. The means by which Manasseh was brought to repentance. II. The way in which his repentance showed itself. III The blessed issue of it. Learn—1. The importance of improving ordinances; 2. The use and benefit of afflictions; 3. The wonderful mercy of our God.[f]

Delayed repentance.—Some reject repentance as a legal and needless thing; some counterfeit and dissemble it; some mistake it; but most neglect and delay it. Mistakes and delays are two great impediments to it, yet more persons delay than refuse it. Our passage to heaven is dangerous; we either split on the rock of presumption, or fall into the gulf of despair; and all delays are grounded either in despair or presumption. The former arises, either from a sense of the greatness of sin as unpardonable; or a fear of the loss of time, as irrevocable: the latter is grounded either on the length of God's patience, the greatness of His mercy, the hope of long life, the power of repenting at pleasure, or the examples of those that found mercy upon a late repentance.[g]

13—17. (13) **in the second month**, *see* on *v.* 2. (14) **the altars**, ch. xxviii. 24, 25. (15) **ashamed**, "were put to the blush by the forwardness of the laity."[a] The special reference may be to those priests, etc., who had delayed joining in these reforms. **into the house**, into the priests' court, not within the temple building. (16) **of the hand**, *etc.*, the Levites being obliged to help in slaying the numerous victims.[b] (17) **had the charge**, bec. these unsanctified people could not do it for themselves.

Real repentance.—

> What better can we do, than, to the place
> Repairing where He judged us, prostrate fall
> Before Him reverent, and there confess
> Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
> Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek?"[c]

18—22. (18) **otherwise**, *i.e.* not in strict accordance with Mosaic rules. The uncleanness specially applied to those who had journeyed to the passover from the districts of Israel. (19) **prepareth his heart**, so is sincere; heart-clean, though not

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the mitigating clause in his character 2 Ki. xvii. 2."—*Jamieson.*

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Whitecross.

Hezekiah sends posts through the land

a 2 Sa. xviii. 19—32; 2 Chr. xxx. 10; Jer. li. 31; Job ix. 25, 26. "In Persia a regular system of couriers was first organised."—*Ayre.*

b 2 Ki. xv. 19, 20; 1 Chr. v. 26.

"This passage by no means implies that the fall of Samaria and final captivity of the Israelites had as yet taken place."—*Spk. Com.*

c De. x. 16.

d Ro. vi. 13; xii. 1.

e Is. xvii. 3—11; Hos. v. 1—4.

v. 8. *P. Henry*, 18 *Sers.* 319; *T. Boston*, iii. 327.

f C. Simeon, M.A.

g Francis Fuller.

the feast of the passover kept

a Wordsworth.

b 2 Chr. xxix. 22, 34.

Though at present you have not the sweet assurance of acceptance in your heart, it does not therefore follow that all your sins are not blotted out by the precious blood of Christ.

c Milton.

Hezekiah prays for imperfect worshippers

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ceremonially clean. (20) **healed,** "pardoned their uncleanness, and overlooked it." Poss. Isaiah brought some message to this effect.[a] (21) **seven days,** Ex. xii. 15, xiii. 6. **loud instruments,** such as suited triumphant praise. (22) **good knowledge,** the correct and acceptable manner of Divine service. **making confession,** of past sin.[b]

God's condescension to the upright.—Early part of the reign of Hezekiah. I. The leading features of this history. They are two. 1. The jealousy of God respecting His own ordinances and appointments; 2. The condescension of God towards the upright, under their manifold shortcomings and defects. II. The leading instructions to be derived from it. 1. That we are not to confide in duties, because we perform them as well as we can; 2. Nor to be discouraged from duties because we cannot perform them as well as we would.[c]

Premature encouragement.—A young man under deep conviction was led to confess conversion before it occurred. His sinful habits still held sway over him; and the horrors of his soul were greater than ever. He said, "Those Christians who tried to help me meant well, and thought I was converted. But it was rushing me through. I knew there was a distance still between me and God,—something to come I had not found. And, oh! how much I suffered before I lifted from the depths of despair my cry, 'Jesus, help me!'"

23—27. (23) **other seven days,** in imitation of Solomon's feast at the dedication of the temple.[a] (24) **did give,** comp. 1 Ki. viii. 62.[b] (25) **congregation . . Israel,** Israelites who had settled in the land of Judah when idolatry was introduced into Israel. **strangers,** those responding to the invitation of Hez. (26) **since,** *etc.*, comp. what is said of Josiah's passover, 2 Ki. xxiii. 22, 23. (27) **blessed,** Nu vi. 24—26.

Delight in ordinances.—We have here—I. A most valuable record. Notice—1. The feast appointed; 2. The observance of it; 3. Its continuance; and who does not see in this—II. A most instructive lesson—1. To the higher ranks of society; 2. To the community at large?[c]

Worldly worshippers.—A man is not to be supposed to be less a worldly man because when the Sabbath-day comes round he knows it. Nay, it may be his wish to rear his family religiously; it may be decorous, in his thought, every morning to gather his household about him, and go through the ritual service of worship; he may be a constant attendant at church; he may be not only a supporter of religious institutions, but a believer in their efficacy on the community; he may observe all religious usages; and yet his supreme purpose may be worldly. For no one of these things interferes with that purpose. The Sabbath does not interfere with it; the church does not interfere with it; moralities do not interfere with it; and so long as the ruling tendency of his soul to build himself up in worldly things is unmolested, he has no objection to moralities. Indeed, there are many reasons why he prefers to appear strictly moral, while yet he is thoroughly a disciple of mammon.[d]

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a Comp. 2 Ki. xix. 20, xx. 5.
b Ezra x. 11
c *Simeon, M.A.* vv 18, 19. *Dr. B. Kennett*, 31; *J. I. S. Celerier*, 424; *Dr. O. Knox*, vi. 337.
As in the body diseases are incapable of cure till you discover the nature of them; so it is with regard to the soul. O Lord, show me myself! vv. 18—20. *Dr. T. Preston, Saints' Infirmities*, 1638; *T. Manton*, iii. pt. 2, 23; *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 292; *R. P. Buddicom*, ii. 227.
v. 22. *Dr. S. Stennet*, ii. 269.

the priests and Levites bless the people

a 1 Ki. viii. 65.
b 2 Chr. xxxv. 7, 8.
c *C. Simeon, M.A.* v. 27. *G. Hicks, Three Treatises*, 141.
"And looks commercing with the skies, thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes."—*Milton.*
"He only sees well who sees the whole in the parts, and the parts in the whole. I know but three classes of men: those who see the whole, those who see but a part, and those who see both together."—*Lavater.*
d *H. W. Beecher.*

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CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—4. (1) **all Israel,** the entire congregation, inflamed with zeal. **in Ephraim also,** this could only have been in some portions of the territory of Hoshea. **every . . cities,** this indicates that the captivity was not yet accomplished. (2) **courses,** as laid down by David.[a] **of the tents,** or camp.[b] (3) **king's portion,** "the royal contribution from the king's demesnes and revenues.[c] (4) **encouraged,** or supported while set apart to Div. service.

Earnestness needful to success.—Lord Brougham, in his *Autobiography* speaking of the Erskines, with whom he was on terms of intimacy in early life, remarks, "Both these eminent men impressed upon me, as the first of qualities in an advocate, that to which they owed their own great success,—the sacrificing everything to the cause, and indulging in no one topic, or any illustration, or any comment, or even in a phrase or a word, that did not directly and manifestly serve the cause in some material particular. This rule perhaps applies to all the departments of eloquence; but it is of paramount importance, nay, an absolute obligation, and of necessity to be obeyed in the conducting of a cause before any tribunal, even before a popular assembly."

Hezekiah puts down idolatry, and professes for worship of God

a 1 Chr. xxiii. 6, xxiv. 1.

b "The square enclosure, with its gates and stations, its guards and porters, its reliefs, its orderly arrangement, and its tabernacle, or tent, of the great commander in the midst, very much resembled a camp." — *Spk. Com.*

c For Hezekiah's riches, see 2 Chr. xxii. 27—29.

5—10. (5) **honey,** or dates. **the tithe,** Le. xxvii. 30.[a] (6) **by heaps,** or as Heb. *heaps, heaps.* (7) **seventh month,** wh. would complete the harvesting.[b] (8) **they blessed,** rendered thanksgiving for such grace from God, and such liberality in the people. (9) **questioned,** whether all that he saw was for store, beyond immediate necessity. (10) **Azariah,** ch. xxvi. 17.

Popular zeal for God.—In a communication, dated October 2, 1841, the Rev. John Cowan, missionary in Jamaica, writes:—"The people have come to-day to carry materials for the church. I have been remarking the difference between the manner in which they perform their work now, and in the days of slavery. In those days, they were often employed in the same kind of work. The manner in which they walked was indescribable—not faster than half a mile in an hour. I remember also, that those who were thus employed were young people who, otherwise, would have been sprightly and active. It was sickening to see them. Now, the people are as agile and active as if they had never tasted of the cup of slavery. Just now, old and young are passing and repassing with a step so smart and sprightly that it does one's heart good to see them. Their movements are as fast as those of willing workmen in Scotland. Such a change, even in this respect, has the removal of the load of slavery effected."[c]

the offering of the firstfruits

a Ex. xxii. 29; De. xviii. 1—4; Ne. xiii. 12.

b "They began before Pentecost, and ended at Tabernacles." — *Wordsworth.*

"When once enthusiasm has been turned into ridicule, everything is undone, except money and power." — *Corinne.*

c *Whitecross.*

11—19. (11) **chambers,** prop. *store-houses, granaries.* Some of the chambers built round the temple may have been used for this purpose.[a] (12) **faithfully,** honestly: not appropriating any of the store to common uses. (13) **overseers,** keeping watch over, and directing, the workmen employed. (14) **most holy things,** Le. vi. 17. (15) **cities of the priests,** their places of residence: all received their support by careful distribution of the tithe.[b] (16) **besides,** *etc.*, the meaning of this *v.*

Hezekiah provides store-chambers

a 1 Ki. vi. 5. Ne. xiii. 4, 5.

b "Officers were appointed to distribute equal ra-

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tions to all in the cities of the priests who, fr. age or other reasons, could not repair to the temple." —*Jamieson.*

c Comp. Nu. iv. 3, viii. 24; 1 Chr. xxiii. 27.

"Blind zeal is a sword in a madman's hand. No persecutor like a conscientious one."—*Flavel.*

Hezekiah's thoroughness in the service of God

a 2 Ki. xx. 3; Is. xxxviii. 3.

v. 21. *Dr S Clarke.* 85; *W. Enfield.* ii. 176; *J. Hewlett.* iii. 435; *C. Heurtley,* i. 220.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and His Gospel which is nothing else than our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love." —*Cudworth.*

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Sennacherib invades Israel

a "On the Assyrian monument, called 'the Taylor cylinder,' Sennacherib gives an acc. of this war." —*Wordsworth.*

is that the Levites while in attendance at the temple received their rations there. (17) **Levites from twenty years,** priests entered on their office at 30.c (18) **set office,** or business with wh. they were entrusted. (19) **in the fields,** not dwelling in towns.

What zeal for God can do.—It is recorded of John Knox, the noted Scottish Reformer, that during the last year or two of his life he persisted in preaching when really he was not equal to the exertion. Entering the church, his appearance would move the compassion of all; for it was with difficulty he could raise himself into the pulpit, even when assisted by others. Gathering strength and becoming animated as he proceeded, before the close he seemed not only as vigorous as formerly, but surpassed most preachers in his power and fervour. So that, as one said, in his earnestness, "he was like to ding the pulpit into blads,"—that is, to beat it to pieces.

20—21. (20) **good,** *etc.*, acting as a servant of Jehovah. (21) **to seek his God,** or the favour of his God. **all his heart,** sincerely, and earnestly.a

Hezekiah's character.—I. The character of Hezekiah as here drawn. 1. The objects of his attention; 2. The manner of his exertion; 3. The issue of his labours. II. The instruction to be gathered from it. 1. The extent of our duty; 2. The proper mode of engaging in it; 3. The certain issue of our endeavours. Reflections:—(1) How rare is this character; (2) How honourable is this character; (3) How blessed is this character.b

Self-examination.—The Rev. Thomas Halyburton was an eminent and useful minister of the Lord Jesus. In the year 1708 he framed the following questions, by which he appears frequently to have examined himself:—Are daily sins of infirmity searched out, considered, and mourned over? Is care taken to exercise faith distinctly, in order to the pardon of them? Is peace taken, when not powerfully spoken by the Lord? Doth the impression of the necessity and excellency of Christ's blood decay? Are the experiences of its efficacy as distinct as ever? Am I formal in God's worship, secret or public? Do I take due care to educate my family? Are afflictions observed, and duly improved? Am I duly concerned for my flock, and single and diligent in prayer for them, visiting the sick? Have I a due sympathy with afflicted saints and churches? Do I mourn over the sins of the times? Do I hear the voice of God's rod, calling me to a deadness to the world, to my dearest relations, and even to life itself, and to preparation for death, and spirituality in duties?

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

1—5. (1) **Sennacherib,** 2 Ki. xviii. 13. **fenced cities,**a those repaired by Jotham, ch. xxvii. 4. (2) **against Jerusalem,** as the capital city. (3) **stop the waters,** or hide them, so as to secure a supply of water to the besieged.b (4) **the brook,** "not the Kidron, but the natural watercourse of the Gihon, wh. ran down the Tyropœan valley"c *see v.* 31. (5) **strengthened,** *etc.*, by fortifying the city, and preparing weapons, etc. **mills** 1 Ki. ix. 15.

Manasseh's sin.—I. Its nature. 1. Open, in sight of Lord; this true of all sin; God sees. 2. Defiant: carried idolatry into the temple. We may make the house of God a place for idol-worship. 3. Scornful; not without an example of what God has done to similar sinners (comp. *v.* 9). We have many examples of God's anger at sin. II. Its consequences. 1. Corrupt practices. His people (*v.* 9). One sinner destroyeth much good. 2. Hardened hearts (*v.* 13): "To-day if ye will hear His voice," etc. III. Its punishment. 1. Whole nation suffered (*v.* 10); war, etc. 2. Manasseh, the chief offender, a fugitive, a captive, an exile, in great distress of mind. Learn:—(1) Though hand join in hand, etc.; (2) Be sure your sins will find you out.

Siloam's stream.—That stream which flowed from Siloam is, I presume, the brook that Hezekiah speaks of, which in the time of the crusades was not attempted to be stopped up. What the cause of that was we are not told, but it seems the waters of some springs without the city were conveyed into Jerusalem at the time; and that Solomon in his reign had attempted to do the like, and had effected it as to part of the water of the springs of Bethlehem. It was no wonder, then, that Hezekiah should think of introducing the waters of Siloam in like manner into the city in order at once to deprive the besiegers of its waters, and benefit the inhabitants of Jerusalem by them. Probably it was done in the same manner that Solomon brought the waters of Bethlehem thither, that is, by collecting the water of the spring or springs into a subterraneous reservoir, and from thence, by a concealed aqueduct, conveying them into Jerusalem, with this difference, that Solomon took only part of the Bethlehem water, leaving the rest to flow into those celebrated pools which remain to this day; whereas Hezekiah turned all the water of Siloam into the city, absolutely stopping up the outlet into the pool, and filling it up with earth, that no trace of it might be seen by the Assyrians, which seems indeed to be the account of the sacred writer, 2 Chr. xxxii. 30: "The same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon (which is another name for Siloam), and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David." Thus our translators express it; but the original may as well be rendered, "Hezekiah stopped the upper going out of the waters of Gihon, and directed them underneath, to the west of the city of David;" and so Pagninus and Arias Montanus understand the passage; he stopped up, that is, the outlet of the waters of Gihon into the open air, by which they were wont to pass into the pool of Siloam, and became a brook; and by some subterraneous contrivance directed the waters to the west side of Jerusalem.[d]

6–8. (6) **street of the gate,** open space inside the gates. **comfortably,** encouragingly. (7) **more with us,** the expression recalls the words of Elisha.[a] (8) **arm of flesh,** Je. xvii. 5.

Sennacherib's invasion.—The annals of Sennacherib contain a full account of this campaign:—"And because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together

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b "Hez.'s plan was to cover the fountain-heads, so that they might not be discovered by the enemy, and to carry the water by subterranean channels or pipes into the city."—*Jamieson.*

c Spk. Com.

There are two ways by wh. the heart may be filled "with overmuch sorrow;"—the one, when it is too full to express its misery and seek relief in prayer; the other, when sin is more looked at than the Saviour.

The natural man is made up of evil; it is his element: he may abstain from it outwardly, but inwardly he always likes it.

vv. 7, 8. *Dr. W. Pearson, A Ser.* 1704; *Bp. Egerton,* 1757.

"Christian zeal is an earnest and ardent disposition of heart for the promotion of all the interests of vital Christianity."—*Bate.*

d Harmer.

Hezekiah encourages his people

a 2 Ki. vi. 16; comp. 1 Jno. iv. 4.

"Rested, *v.* 8. The margin has, for rested upon, 'leaned.' 'I lean on the words of that good man.' 'All people gladly lean on the

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words of that just judge.' 'Who would lean on the words of that false man?' 'Alas! we leaned upon his words, and have fallen into trouble.' 'My husband, have I not leaned upon your words? Yes, and therefore I have not fallen." —*Roberts.*

"For virtue's self may too much zeal be had; the worst of madness is a saint run mad."—*Pope.*

b Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures.

Sennacherib tries to seduce the people from their loyalty

a "Lachish was evidently at this time one of the strongest fortresses of Judah."—*Stanley.*

b Comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 17—37, xix. 1—35.

c Gesenius.

d "The gasconading language of these commissioners, as recorded in the pages of Isaiah, well marks the arrogant and boastful character of the Assyrians, and is in remarkable conformity with the tone of their inscriptions." —*Kitto.*

Repentance has been beautifully called "a tear dropped from the eye of faith."

e Middleton.

with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates so as to prevent escape. . . Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty. . . All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of his submission to my power." The only discrepancy between these narratives is in the amount of silver which Sennacherib received; probably he exaggerated, or counted in a portion of the spoil, and the sacred historian merely named the sum agreed to be paid as tribute. Layard, however, suggests that "it is probable that Hezekiah was much pressed by Sennacherib, and compelled to give him all the wealth that he could collect, as we find him actually taking the silver from the house of the Lord, as well as from his own treasury, etc. The Bible may, therefore, only include the actual amount of money in the three hundred talents of silver, whilst the Assyrian records comprise all the precious metals taken away."[b]

9—14. (9) **Lachish,** Jos. x. 3, xv. 39.[a] **power,** his host, or army. (10) **abide in the siege,**[b] or *sitting in a stronghold in which ye trust.*[c] Jerusalem was not at this time actually besieged. (11) **to die,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 27. (12) **his high places,** Sen. confuses the false gods and the true. (13) **my fathers,** or predecessors. (14) **your God,** assumed to be on an equality with the gods of other lands.[d]

Manasseh's repentance.—I. Its cause: sorrow and trouble produced by effects of his sin and God's wrath; thought of happiness he had lost and the God he had defied. II. Its marks. 1. Humility, deep and earnest (*v.* 12); 2. Earnest importunate prayer (*v.* 13); 3. Faith: he that cometh to God must believe, etc. III. Its fruit. 1. In his own mind: right state of heart towards God; 2. In his altered circumstances: Divine interposition and deliverance. Learn:—(1) Duty of all to repent of sin; (2) Power of prayer; (3) Divine mercy for chief of sinners; (4) Love of God brings men out of prison of affliction and despair, into heavenly Jerusalem and the kingdom of glory.

The benefits of true repentance.—

Heaven and angels
Take great delight in a converted sinner.
Why should you, then, a servant and professor,
Differ so much from them? If every woman
That commits evil should be therefore kept
Back in desires of goodness, how should virtue
Be known and honour'd? From a man that's blind
To take a burning taper, 'tis no wrong;
He never misses it: but to take light
From one that sees, that's injury and spite.
Pray, whether is religion better served
When lives that are licentious are made honest?
Or when they still run through a sinful blood?
'Tis nothing virtue's temple to deface;
But build the ruins, there's a work of grace.[e]

15—20. (15) **how much less,** indicating that he utterly despised the god of their insignificant little land. (16) **yet more,** 2 Ki. xviii. 19—25, 27—35. (17) **letters,** 2 Ki. xix. 14. (18) **in the Jews' speech,** so that all might understand: they did not regard their mission as merely a diplomatic one. Their object was to produce panic, or at least the weakness wh. follows divided councils. (19) **as against,** the very classing of Jehovah with idols is an offence to the writer of this narrative. (20) **prayed,** comp. 2 Ki. xix. 4, 14—19.

Temptation.—The late Rev. John Thomas, one of the missionary brethren of Serampore, was one day, after addressing a crowd of the natives on the banks of the Ganges, accosted by a Brahmin as follows: "Sir, don't you say that the devil tempts men to sin?" "Yes," answered Mr. Thomas. "Then," said the Brahmin, "certainly the fault is the devil's; the devil, therefore, and not man, ought to suffer the punishment." While the countenances of many of the natives discovered their approbation of the Brahmin's inference, Mr. Thomas, observing a boat, with several men on board, descending the river, with that facility of instructive retort for which he was distinguished, replied, "Brahmin, do you see yonder boat?" "Yes." "Suppose I were to send some of my friends to destroy every person on board, and bring me all that is valuable in the boat; who ought to suffer punishment? I for instructing them, or they for doing this wicked act?" "Why," answered the Brahmin, with emotion, "you ought all to be put to death together." "Ah, Brahmin," replied Mr. T., "and if you and the devil sin together, the devil and you will be punished together."

21—26. (21) **all the mighty men,** the visitation specially affecting the officers. *See* 2 Ki. xix. 35.[a] **they,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xix. 37. (22) **the Lord saved,** as He had promised. (23) **magnified,** these were prob. recognitions of the fact that he had successfully withstood the Assyrian monarch who was threatening all the surrounding kingdoms. (24) **sick,** *etc.*, with a disease likely to have a fatal termination.[b] **a sign,** 2 Ki. xx. 1—11. (25) **heart was lifted up,**[c] prob. by the sudden increase of his wealth thro' the many presents he received, *v.* 23. (26) **humbled himself,** 2 Ki. xx. 19.[d]

Danger of delaying repentance.—There be many to-morrow Christians, that set their day with God; at such a day they will repent, and not before, as if they had the lordship of time, and the monopoly of grace, whereas time and grace are only at God's disposing; as St. Ambrose saith, "God hath promised pardon to the penitent, but He hath not promised to-morrow to the negligent." As St. Augustine saith, "He that giveth pardon to the penitent, doth not always give repentance to the sinner." If I put God off to-day, He may put me off to-morrow; if I put off this hour of grace, I may never have another gracious hour; to-day if I put by his hands of mercy, to-morrow He may stretch out His hand of justice. It is true, whilst I have time, I may come in; but it is also true, when I would come in, I may not have time. This is certain, when I repent I shall have mercy; but this is as certain, when I would have mercy I may not find repentance.

27—33. (27) **exceeding much,** 2 Ki. xx. 13; Is. xxxix. 2.

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Sennacherib writes blasphemous letters

"As I have known an infant bear such striking resemblance to his father that what the tongue could not tell, his face did; and people, struck by the likeness, remarked of the nursling, He is the very image of his father;—so the Christian life, without any occasion for his lips talking it, should proclaim him to the world a child of God."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

"True repentance is to cease from sin."—*Ambrose.*

the Assyrian host destroyed

Hezekiah's sickness

a Berosus says the agency was pestilence. *Kitto* favours the idea that it was the simoom.

b Is. xxxviii. 1.

c 2 Chr. xxvi. 16.

d Le. xxvi. 18, 19.

v. 21. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 377.

v. 24. *Bp. Prideaux, Sers.*

v. 25 *T. Manton,* iv. 694; *S. Davies,* i. 465.

"Late repentance is seldom true, but true repentance is never too late."—*Venning.*

end of the

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reign of Hezekiah

(28) **stalls,** or stabling. **cotes,** similar word to that translated *stalls*. (29) **God had given,** temporal rewards of his religious faithfulness. (30) **Gihon.** *v.* 3.[a] (31) **business,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xx. 12—19. **left him,** to form his own judgment, and take his own way, so that his disposition might be tested and his weakness revealed. (32) **vision of Isaiah,**[b] Is. xxxvi.—xxxix. (33) **chiefest,**[c] or highest: designing to give him special honour.

Hezekiah deserted.—I. The person here spoken of. 1. His personal character; 2. His peculiar necessities. II. The dispensation here described. 1. The suspension of grace: 2. The withdrawment of comfort. III. The purpose of that dispensation. 1. To discover sin, with a view to its cure; 2. To conduct to greater happiness and honour. IV. The issue of the trial—he sinned. 1. Wherein was the sin? He neglected an opportunity of proclaiming the true God, and indulged in a vain self-seeking; 2. How small in comparison with the sins of others—of ourselves; 3. How soon repented of; 4. How severely visited.

The Christian uses of trial.—It is said that migrating birds, that commonly in their vast journeyings keep very high in the air, require a wind that blows against them in order to make progress, and keep their elevation, for it assists in raising them. So the soul of the Christian, winging its way through this world to a better, is aided rather than impeded in its spiritual migration by the contrary winds of trial. Those storms that seemed against us, do only, when encountered in the right direction, assist to raise us, and keep us steadily soaring towards heaven.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

B.C. 698.

Manasseh begins to reign

revival of idolatry

1—6. (1) **Manasseh,**[a] *who makes forget.* It is singular that the young prince should be named after a tribe of Israel. Born after Hez.'s recovery fr. sickness. (2) **evil,** prob. thro' the influence of those who superintended his education, and ruled the kingdom during his minority. (3) **built again,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xviii. 4. **groves,** *a grove* only is mentioned in 2 Ki. xxi. 3, 7. (4) **in the house,** *i.e.* within the temple precincts. (5) **two courts,** that of the priests and that of the people. (6) **through the fire,**[b] ch. xxviii. 3, 4.

Manasseh, or the material and the moral in human life.—In the life of this king we have three instructive views of the secular and the spiritual. We have here—I. The elevation of the secular and the degradation of the spiritual. We have also—II. The degradation of the secular, and the elevation of the spiritual. Here note the history of this king, and learn—1. That man's circumstances are no necessary hindrances to conversion; 2. That heaven's mercy is greater than man's iniquities. We have also—III. The concurrent elevation both of the spiritual and the secular. Manasseh's restoration to the throne, and the work of reformation to which he sets himself, suggests two subjects for thought. 1. The tendency of godliness to promote man's secular elevation; 2. The tendency of penitence to make restitution.[c]

Sin concealed.—It is said of Alcibiades, that he embroidered a curtain with lions and eagles, the most stately of beasts and

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a "He stopped the upper outflow of the waters of Gihon, and led them down westward to the city."—*Williams.*

b Is i. 1.

c "In this new phrase we have an indication that the catacomb of David was now full; and, in accordance with this, we find that the later princes have sepulchres quite distinct from the old burial places."—*Spk. Com.*

v 30. *B. E. Nicholls*, 129.

v. 31. *Dr. J. Conant*, vi. 389; *E. Cooper*, ii. 61; *H. Vershoyle*, 263.

d *Dr. Cheever.*

a 2 Ki. **xxi. 1.**

b One son only is mentioned in 2 Ki. xxi. 6.

vv. 1, 2. *F. H. Hutton*, 1.

c *Dr. Thomas.*

Man without a conscience is a machine without a regulator; sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, and seldom right. Conscience without a Divine light, is like a dial without the sun a shade, a

birds, that he might the more closely hide the picture that was under, full of owls and satyrs, the most sadly remarkable of other creatures. Thus Satan embroiders the curtain with the image of virtue, that he may easily hide the foul picture of sin that is under it.[d]

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blank, a useless instrument.

d Spencer.

7—10. (7) **carved image,** symbol or image of the goddess *Ashtoreth.*[a] (8) **of Moses,** "a testimony to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch."[b] (9) **made . . to err,** his example, and his actions, leading them astray. **worse,** bec. of the knowledge and privileges wh. they had. (10) **spake,** 2 Ki. xxi. 10—16.

the people led into idolatrous practices

a Eze. viii. 3, 5.

b Wordsworth.

The force of example (*v.* 9).—When John Newton was on board the *Harwich*, he became acquainted with a young midshipman, who was then free from open vice. Newton corrupted him, and he soon arrived at maturity in guilt. Years after, they met, and as Newton's conscience now began to be listened to again, he was anxious to rescue his former companion, if he could, from effects of which he had himself been the guilty cause. As he no longer felt infidelity to be tenable, he strove to undeceive his victim. His usual reply, however, was, that Newton was the first to give him an idea of his liberty, which he would not now forego. His efforts were vain; he got worse, spurned all restraints, gave loose to every passion: his excesses threw him into a malignant fever, of which he died; but not till he had appalled all those about him, and pronounced his own sad doom, without showing any symptom that he hoped or asked for mercy.[c]

vv. 9, 10. *F. H. Hutton*, 20.

Many persons who appear to repent are like sailors who throw their goods overboard in a storm, and wish for them again in a calm.

c Tweedie's Lamp to the Path.

11—17. (11) **king of Assyria,** Esar-haddon.[a] **among the thorns,**[b] either fr. his hiding places; or the word should be rendered living, *they took him alive.* **fetters,** two chains of brass. **Babylon,** Ge. xi. 1—9. (12) **in affliction,** a prisoner, a captive, and doomed. (13) **prayed,** so turning with his whole soul to Him.[c] (14) **built a wall,** wh. may have been damaged when the king was taken prisoner. **Gihon,** ch. xxxii. 4. **fish gate,** near N.E. corner of the lower city. **Ophel,** the S. part of the temple hill.[d] (15) **strange,** *etc.*, as put by him (*vv.* 3—5). (16) **repaired,** *etc.*, wh. he had himself desecrated. (17) **high places,** ch. xxxi. 1. Manasseh's reform compares unfavourably with that of his father.

Manasseh's captivity and release

a "Esar-haddon mentions Manasseh among his tributaries; and he was the only king of Assyria who, fr. time to time, held his court at Babylon."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Heb. *chach*, the sharp, thorn-like hook by wh. prisoners were caught and held like fish."—*Wordsworth.*

c Ac. ix. 11.

d 2 Chr. xxvi. 9, xxvii. 3; Ne. iii. 26.

vv. 10—13. *Dr. J. Conant*, i. 257.

v. 11. *J. Saurin*, vi. 424; *R. W. Evans, Script. Biog.* ii. 159; *F. H. Hutton*, 38.

vv. 12, 13. *H. Belfrage, Disc. to Aged; J. Slade*, iv. 159; *G. W. Lewis*, ii. 74; *F. H. Hutton*, 54; *J.*

Manasseh's captivity.—Critics who are fond of inventing "new readings," might, upon consideration, be led to suggest that we should substitute "Nineveh." or "Assyria," for "Babylon," in the above passage. Why should the Assyrian generals carry their royal captive to Babylon? Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. This apparently singular circumstance is explained by the remains recently discovered at Babylon. The identification of the king here mentioned is easy. The Assyrian monuments, and both sacred and profane history, all lead to the conclusion that Esar-haddon, the son and immediate successor of Sennacherib (2 Ki. xix. 37), was the contemporary of Manasseh, the son and immediate successor of Hezekiah. Now it is remarkable that, of all the Assyrian monarchs, Esar-haddon seems to have been the only one who actually ruled at Babylon. During the period in which Babylon was subject to Assyria, it was commonly ruled by native viceroys; but the inscriptions recently discovered in Babylonia state that Esar-haddon built himself a

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W. Warter, ii. 513.

vv. 12—16. *Dr. J. Toulmin*, 355.

vv. 14—17. *F. J. Hutton*, 70.

e W. H. Groser.

end of the reign of Manasseh

a "The only name of an Egyptian deity that we find in the Jewish annals."—*Stanley.*

v. 20. *F. H. Hutton*, 86.

"The grave is a common treasury to which we must all be taken."—*Burke.*

b Sarah Martin, the Prison Preacher.

the reign of Amon

a 2 Ki. xxi. 23, 24.

"An evil conscience is like the raging sea, which can only be calmed by the sign of the cross of Christ. It is a gnawing worm in the bones, for the removal of which nothing less is required than the blood of the Son of God." — *Krummacher.*

b J. Spencer Hill.

"Those who give themselves up to the service of sin, enter the palace of pleasure by wide portals of marble, which conceal the low wicket, behind which leads into the fields, where they are in a short time sent

palace in that province. He consequently resided there, at least for a time, which cannot be said of any other monarch of that line. Now naturally, therefore, it follows that the captive king of Judah should have been taken to Babylon, and not to Nineveh! Facts of this kind should check the hasty reception of "new" and "improved" readings, merely because the originals may present a difficulty, or seem to contradict our preconceived notions.[e]

18—20. (18) **prayer,** a prayer of Manasseh is found in the Sept., but cannot be authentic. (19) **of the seers,** or of *Hosai*, poss. a prophetic name. (20) **in his own house,** bec. the king's sepulchres were full. **Amon,** *the hidden;* name of one of the eight principal deities of Egypt.[a]

God hears prayer.—Introduce by referring to the anxious question, which is awakened in many minds, Wherewithal shall I appear before God? and then proceed to discuss these points:—I. Who was entreated? God. II. Who prevailed with God? Manasseh. III. How is it that the entreaty of the sinner can prevail with God?[b]

Sepulchres in gardens (*v.* 20).—It is probable that they buried him in the garden of his house. This was conformable to the practice of the Jews (2 Ki. xxi. 18). In such a place Christ was buried. The Romans had sometimes sepulchres in their gardens. Galba, the emperor, was buried in his garden; and so was Cyrus, king of Persia. The Greeks and Romans frequently buried the dead in their own houses. It was enjoined by the Thebans, before they built a house, to build a sepulchre in the place.

21—25. (21) **two years,** 2 Ki. xxi. 19. (22) **sacrificed,** *etc.*, fully restoring the idolatrous worship; he was born and trained while his father was an idolater. (23) **trespassed more,** going ever deeper into sin. (24) **conspired,** bec. very prob. the self-will he showed in religion made him tyrannous in government.[a] (25) **Josiah,** *whom Jehovah heals.*

Hezekiah and Manasseh.—A contrast. We have in the end of the one and the beginning of the other a magnificent sunset, and a sunrise of quite an opposite description. We have a good father and king closing life in Hezekiah; a bad son and successor commencing life in Manasseh. I. Consider Hezekiah, and what we learn about him. 1. We learn that genuine goodness shall not want appropriate record and remembrance; 2. God the inspirer of goodness in the hearts of men will not forget it; 3. The beneficiaries of goodness will not be unmindful of their benefactors; 4. Sympathetic imitators will mirror forth their goodness from whom they have derived its idea and impulse. II. Now turn to Manasseh, and what the history says about him. 1. A youthful king; 2. A long reign; 3. A life of great wickedness. Application:—(1) What may parents learn from the son of such a father? Hezekiah hoarded up wealth for his son. Did he undervalue the moral element in him? (2) What may subjects learn from the successor of such a king? Not to trust religion to princes who may be alternately reformers and destroyers.[b]

The punishment of sin.—It is not only justice to the law that requires punishment of its transgression by the monarch, but love to the peace, purity, and honour of the subjects of his kingdom. It is not only justice to the father's authority that

requires and leads him to chastise his son for disobedience, but love to the rest of the family, that they may not imitate his sin nor be corrupted by it. So with God. He punishes sin, not only upon principles of justice, but upon the ground of love.[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

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to feed swine."—*James D. Burns.*

c *J. Bate.*

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Josiah begins his reign

revival of true religion

1—7. (1) **eight years,** so the kingdoms must have been governed by a regency. (2) **right,** though he was the son of such an idolatrous father.[a] (3) **eighth year,** when he was 16 years of age: Jewish youths were regarded as attaining their majority at 13. **twelfth year,** when he was about 20. Then he was strong enough to act an independent part. (4) **images,** marg. *sun-images.* **groves,** or Astarte pillars. **strowed it,** 2 Ki. xxiii. 6. (5) **priests,** *i.e.* the idolatrous priests. (6) **cities of Manasseh,** *etc.,* Josiah claimed authority over the whole country, as there was now no Israelite king. **with their mattocks,** correctly in their desolate places.[b] (7) **he had,** *etc.,* showing that the king personally superintended the business.

Josiah, or early piety.—His example is worthy the imitation of all young persons. Notice—I. His early piety. 1. While young he sought God; 2. Young persons may become religious under great disadvantages; 3. His early piety gave him great stability of character; 4. His religion secured him honour and happiness. II. His eminent piety. Early piety leads to eminent piety. 1. It gave him opportunity for improvement as he grew in age; 2. It led to eminent piety. III. Josiah's peaceful death and honourable burial (Chr. 24—27). 1. Though a good man, yet not faultless; 2. His peaceful death; 3. His honourable funeral. —*Early piety exemplified in Josiah.*—Observe—I. The object after whom Josiah sought—David's God. Now God was—1. David's teacher; 2. David's comfort; 3. David's delight; 4. David's defence. II. The manner how he sought after that object. 1. He sought God from a deep conviction that his conduct, and the conduct of Israel generally, was highly offensive to God, and that they were exposed to imminent peril; 2. He sought with great self-abasement of soul; 3. He sought God by destroying the idols out of the land; 4. He sought God by restoring the true worship, and frequenting it; 5. He sought God with all his heart. III. The period of life when he did it. "While he was yet young." We should seek God while we are yet young, because—(1) God is the best object whom we can seek; (2) Youth is the best time for seeking God.

Jewish cemeteries.—In the parallel passage (2 Kings xxiii. 6) we read, "upon the graves of the children of the people." Dr. Kitto considers these passages to refer to the common or public cemeteries of the Jews. The private and family sepulchres were of the nature of caverns, but these were beyond the reach of the mass of the people. The public cemeteries were placed at a distance of not less than 2,000 cubits from a Levitical city; and were required to be more than 50 cubits from any other city. Neither foreigners nor criminals were allowed to be buried in these cemeteries. The price of Judas's treason, we are told, was used to buy "a field to bury strangers in." Places were appointed, too, in which to bury criminals. Lightfoot says

a "This prince was the best and most beloved of the kings who had sat upon this throne since David, and was approached by none in his zeal against idolatry, and in his devotedness to the Lord."—*Kitto.*

"His character had early shown a decided bias in favour of elevation and manliness of life."—*Ewald.*

b "Heb. word is not fr. *chereb,* a sword, or axe, but fr. *choreb,* and *chorebah,* dryness." — *Wordsworth.*

Le. xxvi. 31, 33.

vv. 1, 2. *C. E. Kennaway,* 224.

v. 3. *W. May,* 25; *J. I. S. Cellerier,* 360; *S. Lavington,* 47; *Dr. J. Fletcher,* iii. 313; *A. Gatty,* ii. 14; *Bp. Wordsworth,* ii. 315.

"The sick man's sacrifice is but a lame oblation. Pious treasures, laid up in health ful days, excuse the defect of sick non-performances, without which we must needs look back with anxiety upon the lost

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opportunities of health; and may have cause rather to envy than pity the ends of penitent public sufferers who go with healthful prayers into the last scene of their lives, and in the integrity of their faculties return their spirit unto God that gave it."—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

Josiah orders the repair of the house of God

a 2 Ki. xxiii. 4.

b "The exact chronological order is not followed either in Kings or Chronicles."—*Jamieson.*

c Spk. Com.

Pr. xxv. 1.

"A heavenly awe overshadowed and encompassed, as it still ought, and must, all earthly business whatsoever."—*Carlyle.*

Hilkiah, the priest, finds a copy of the law

a "It would seem that the book of the law was found by Hilkiah in the treasury, where they stowed the money for security."—*Bertheau.*

b 2 Ki. xxii. 8.

(quoting the Talmud), "They buried not an executed person in the grave of his fathers; but there were two places of burial for such—one for them that were slain with the sword and strangled, and the other for them that were burned and stoned; and when the flesh was wasted, the bones were gathered and buried in the graves (cemeteries or sepulchres) of their fathers." In such a place our Saviour would have been buried had not Joseph of Arimathæa begged the body, and buried it in his own sepulchre. The public cemeteries, it would appear, were covered with grass, no mounds being used in the form of a grave, as in modern burial-grounds. Memorial stones were placed near the spot, sometimes of a round or pyramidal form, or, where an inscription was required, of an oblong character. Dr. Kitto instances the burial-ground of Sarbout-el-Cadem, in Idumea, as furnishing a good illustration of these cemeteries and monuments.

8—13. (8) **to repair,** from the account in *Kings* it appears that this work of purging the temple was commenced first.[a] The cleansing and repairing of the temple may have been going on while the destruction of idols, altars, etc., was in hand.[b] (9) **money,** 2 Ki. xxii. 4. **they returned,** or had returned, *i.e.* from their journeys for collecting moneys. (10) **workmen,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxii. 5. Eastern people will only work under overseers. (11) **floor,** marg. *rafter.* **the kings of Judah,** Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon. (12) **faithfully,** or skilfully, and diligently. (13) **scribes,** now first spoken of as a class,[c] forming distinct division of the Levitical body.

Zeal for the Master (*v.* 12).—The late Rev. John Campbell, of Kingsland, used to relate an anecdote illustrative of the devotedness of Mr. Townsend to the cause of Christ. Finding him, one Tuesday morning, leaning on the balustrade that led to the breakfast room of the Religious Tract Society, and unable to proceed from a difficulty of breathing, Mr. C. remarked, "Mr. Townsend, is this you? Why should you come in this state of body to our meetings? You have attended them for a long time, and you should now leave that work for younger men." Looking upon his friend with a countenance brightened by the sentence or thought that was struggling for utterance, his words were, "O Johnny, Johnny, man, it is hard to give up working in the service of such a Master!"

14—17. (14) **found a book,** prob. an orig. copy of the Pentateuch.[a] (15) **the book,** this term indicates that it was the temple copy.[b] (16) **back again,** when the repairing work was completed. (17) **the money,** *v.* 9.

The Bible and the bullet.—Samuel Proctor, a class-leader in the Methodist Society, was formerly a grenadier in the first regiment of foot guards, and took part in the struggle on the plains of Waterloo. He always carried a small Bible in one pocket, and a Hymn-Book in the other. In the evening of June 16th his regiment was ordered to dislodge the French from a wood, of which they had taken possession, and from which they annoyed the allied army. While thus engaged, he was thrown a distance of four or five yards, by a force for which he could not account at the time; but when he came to examine his Bible, he saw, with lively gratitude to the Preserver of his life, what it was

that had thus driven him. A musket-ball had struck him where his Bible rested, and penetrated nearly half through the volume. All who saw the ball said that it would undoubtedly have killed him, had it not been for the Bible, which served as a shield.—*The Bible placed in the churches.*—Formerly a large Bible was chained in some convenient place in every parish church. Cranmer, the first Protestant archbishop, and afterwards a martyr, who was appointed to the see of Canterbury during the reign of Henry VIII., was very desirous of obtaining a translation of the Scriptures into English. He often solicited this favour of the king, and, at length, secured it. When some printed copies were put into his hands, he blessed God, and sent one to his majesty, and begged that all his subjects might have liberty to read it. An injunction was forthwith issued, which required an English Bible, of the largest size, to be procured for the use of every parish church, at the expense of the minister and churchwardens, and prohibited the common people from being discouraged to read or hear the Scriptures. The book was everywhere received with inexpressible joy, every one that was able perused it, and the poor eagerly flocked to hear it read. Some aged persons learned to read on purpose to peruse it, and even little children crowded to hear it. Reader! dost thou value thy Bible?

18—22. (18) **a book,** it is singular to find the king unacquainted with the Pentateuch. (19) **rent his clothes,** the usual sign of grief and alarm. (20) **Abdon,** or Achbor.[a] (21) **of the Lord,** through His prophet. (22) **Huldah,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxii. 14. **wardrobe,** prob. the royal garments. **college,** or a particular suburb of Jerus.

The way to read the Bible.—You put your Bible in your bookcase. There it stands all the week, perhaps. Or you read it once a day, or once a week, as the case may be. And you do it very decorously. The room is still, and your children sit around the room in a stiff row. You put on your spectacles and read; and as you read, you lower the key of your voice—for when men want to be religious, they always take a solemn note; and you read all the way through the chapter, and are like a blind man walking along a road where there are all sorts of flowers on both sides, never seeing a single one. Men read thus, and feel a great deal better because they have read the Bible to their family! Now, I tell you, the only thing you read in the Bible is that which jumps into you, and which you cannot get out of you. It is the vital, luminous part, and not the dead letter that you read, if you read any part of the Bible.[b]—*The study of the Bible.*—How utterly impossible it would be in the manhood of the world to imagine any other instructor of mankind than the Bible. And for that reason, every day makes it more and more evident that the thorough study of the Bible, the investigation of what it teaches and what it does not teach, and the determination of the limits of what we mean by its inspiration, the determination of the degrees of authority to be ascribed to the different books, if any degrees are to be admitted, must take the lead of all other studies. He is guilty of high treason against the faith who fears the result of any investigation, whether philosophical, or scientific, or historical. And therefore nothing should be more welcome than the extension of knowledge of any and of every kind—for every increase in our accumulations of knowledge

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"The Bible is a rock of diamonds, a chain of pearls, the sword of the Spirit; a chart by which the Christian sails to eternity; the map by which he daily walks; the sun-dial by which he sets his life; the balance in which he weighs his actions."—*T. Watson.*

Theodosius the Second dedicated a great part of the night to the study of the Scriptures."

Shaphan, the scribe, reads the book of the law to Josiah

a 2 Ki. xxii. 12.

"The intellect has only one failing, which to be sure is a very considerable one; it has no conscience. Napoleon is the readiest instance of this. If his heart had borne any proportion to his brain he had been one of the greatest men in all history."—*Lowell.*

b H. W. Beecher.

"I use the Scriptures, not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and

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throws fresh light upon the real problems of the day. If geology proves to us that we must not interpret the first chapters of Genesis literally; if historical investigation shall show us that inspiration, however it may protect the doctrine, yet was not empowered to protect the narrative of the inspired writers from occasional inaccuracy; if careful criticism shall prove that there have been occasionally interpolations and forgeries in that Book, as in many others—the results should still be welcome. Even the mistakes of careful and reverent students are more valuable now than truth held in unthinking acquiescence. The substance of the teaching which we derive from the Bible will not really be affected by anything of this sort; while its hold upon the minds of believers, and its power to stir the depths of the spirit of man, however much weakened at first, must be immeasurably strengthened in the end, by clearing away blunders which may have been fastened on it by human interpretation.[c]

23—28. (23) **the man that sent,** not calling king; comp. *v.* 26. (24) **I will bring,** nothing will prevent the fulfilment of the threatenings. (25) **shall be poured out,**[a] delay there may be, removal of the wrath there cannot be. (26) **king of Judah,** this was the part of the message special to him. (27) **rend thy clothes,** *v.* 19. (28) **in peace,** a reward of his personal faithfulness; but it was too late for even that to save the nation.

A tender spirit.—I. Give a general account of a tender heart. 1. It implies a quick and ready sense of feeling in spiritual thing—quickness of apprehension—ready reflections of conscience—a disposition to be easily and suitably affected; 2. A pliable disposition to yield to Divine influences. II. The way in which such a temper should express itself. 1. In relation to the Word of God; 2. In relation to sin; 3. In relation to providential events; 4. In relation to the honour of God. III. What foundation is laid for such a temper in Christianity. 1. Good men in the ancient Church were not strangers to it; 2. The recompenses of the life to come are more fully revealed; 3. Richer discoveries of grace are made to us; 4. Ceremonial observances have given way to substantials of religion; 5. The softening Spirit is more plentifully communicated. IV. Inferences. 1. Discern the difference between a truly Christian temper and some things mistaken for it: it is not natural easiness of disposition, not occasional tenderness; 2. Let us all seek after and cultivate this tenderness of spirit; 3. If conscious of its possession, take the comfort of it as good evidence of a renewed and Christian state.[b]

Conditions of Divine healing.—Chromatius, a heathen, sought a cure from one of the early Christians who was reputed to have the gift of healing. As a condition thereto, he demanded that all the idols in his house should be broken. The heathen gave his keys to the Christian, who went about the house, and destroyed all the idols he could find, and then went to praying for the desired cure; but in vain. The sick man was as sick as ever. The Christian said, "There is yet an idol in your house, that must be destroyed." The heathen confessed that he had one of beaten gold, of great value, that he desired to save. When it was broken, Chromatius was healed.—*The slavery of sin.*—"At the close of the meeting, many asked me to pray for them, saying they wished to be Christians for the rest of their lives. As I left them, promising to be down on Sunday, I noticed a man following

adored." — *Hon. R. Boyle.*

"I have many books that I cannot sit down to read; they are indeed good and sound; but, like halfpence, there goes a great quantity to a small amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books; but I have one book worth them all, called the Bible." — *J. Newton.*

c *Abp. Temple.*

message of Huldah, the prophetess

a De. xxix. 24—27.

vv. 26—28. *Dr. R. Sibbs, Saints' Cordials.*

Keep your conscience tender—tender as the eye that closes its lids against an atom of dust, or as that sensitive plant which I have seen shrink and shut its leaves, not merely at the rude touch of a finger, but at the breath of the mouth.

b *Dr. Evans.*

"Millions now in heaven derived the strongest and most invaluable consolation from this book; and scarcely can we fix our eyes upon a single passage in this wonderful book which has not afforded comfort or instruction to thousands, and been wet with tears of penitential sorrow or

me. Stopping me, he began, 'My friend, I want a discharge.' Supposing he meant a discharge from the army, I said I was afraid that would be hard to obtain, as he appeared to be recovering. 'Oh,' said he, 'that's not what I mean; I want a discharge from the *devil's army*. I've been fighting and serving in his ranks for twenty-five years, and I'm tired and sick of his service. I want to leave his ranks and enlist under the banner of the cross, and fight for Jesus the balance of my life.' I told him he could have that discharge by *deserting* the devil's ranks and coming over to the Lord Jesus. I talked and prayed with him, leaving him some suitable reading. On Sunday, at the close of the evening meeting, he told me he had come over, and was 'soldier of the cross.'"[c]

29—33. (29) **all the elders,** as representatives of the nation. (30) **he read,** either actually read aloud himself or caused to be read.[a] (31) **in his place,** or *upon his pillar*. (32) **stand to it,** made them join him in taking the pledges of that covenant. (33) **all . . fathers,** his example being a steadfast one, and his government strong.[b]

The Bible the saviour of the Church.—Men say that the Church has saved the Bible. I say that the Bible has saved the Church ten thousand times over. You shall find that when great questions come up in a community churches do not go ahead. You cannot make them. Churches are like the baggage-wagons of an army. They carry the provisions and indispensable things; but, after all, baggage-wagons never go first in a march. And the Church is so busy taking care of the things which it carries, that it has no time to devote to new things that present themselves. Reforms hardly ever originate in churches. I am not speaking against churches; I am merely putting them where they put themselves, and saying that tendencies to unusual conduct in the application of Gospel principles to new questions are oftentimes ridiculed by ministers, and rejected from pulpits, and refused places in conference meetings, and stigmatised by church-members as being fanatical.[c]—*Destruction of the Bible.*—Destroy this volume, as the enemies of human happiness have vainly endeavoured to do, and you render us profoundly ignorant of our Creator, of the formation of the world which we inhabit, of the origin and progenitors of our race, of our present day and future destination, and consign us through life to the dominion of fancy, doubt, and conjecture. Destroy this volume, and you deprive us of religion, with all the animating consolations, hopes, and prospects which it affords, and leaves us nothing but the choosing (miserable alternative!) between the cheerless gloom of infidelity and the monstrous shadows of paganism. Destroy this volume, and you unpeople heaven; bar for ever its doors against the wretched posterity of Adam; restore to the king of terrors his fatal sting; bury hope in the same grave which receives our bodies; consign all who have died before us to eternal sleep or endless misery; and allow us to expect nothing at death but a similar fate. In a word, destroy this volume, and you take from us at once everything which prevents existence becoming of all curses the greatest; you blot out the sun, dry up the ocean, and take away the atmospheres of the moral world, and degrade man to a situation from which he may look up with envy to that of the brutes that perish.[d]

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grateful joy, drawn from eyes that will weep no more."—*Dr. Payson.*

"The dispute about religion and the practice of it seldom go together."—*Young.*

c Christian Work on the Battle-field.

Josiah reads the book of the law to the elders

a 2 Ki. xxiii. 1-3.

b "So far as to abstain fr. open idolatry, but in their hearts they still inclined to the worship of other gods, as the prophet Jeremiah testifies. Je. xiii. 10, xxv. 3, xi., xiii."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 33. *Abp. J. Usher*, xiii. 567.

c H. W. Beecher.

"God is light. So is the religion of the Bible. It has no fellowship with darkness. Not one of its graces springs from stupidity or ignorance, but all of them from the knowledge of God. False religions are founded in darkness. The religion of the Bible, like its Author, dwells in light. God also is love; and so is the religion of the Bible. 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him.'"—*Dr. G. Spring.*

d Dr. Payson.

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CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

Josiah keeps the passover

1—6. (1) **a passover,** 2 Ki. xxiii. 21—23. (2) **in their charges,** *i.e.* re-established their courses and duties.[a] (3) **that taught,** they were the ministers or instructors of the people in all matters pertaining to the Divine worship. **put,** *etc.*,[b] for some reason it must have been removed fr. the holy of holies. **not a burden,** *i.e.* not their duty to move it, as had been their duty before the temple was built. Other duties of administration and instruction now devolved on them. (4) **by the houses,** *etc.*, 1 Chr. ix. 10. **writing of Solomon,** who prob. made new arrangements when the temple was opened. (5) **holy place,** *i.e.* the priests' court. (6) **that they may do,** the passover having been so seldom observed, precise instructions were needed.

Religion stronger than science.—Skill and science have wrought wonders. The world stands amazed at their achievements. They have tamed fierce beasts of prey, and brought even the elements of nature into subjection. They have spanned the ocean, annihilated distance, joined remote continents, given life to steam, a tongue to the wire, and a voice to the lightning. But there are passions in the human heart more fierce than beasts of prey, and disturbing forces more tumultuous than nature's stormy winds and tempests, and more difficult of control than the subtle but omnipotent element of electricity. No mere human skill can master these. Christian science, the science taught in the school of Christ, alone can enable you to obtain the mastery here.[d]—*Imputation of sin.*—To impute sin to an offender, or to lay it to his charge, is to treat him as a guilty person, and is not merely a previous step to his being so treated. Not to impute sin, or not to lay it to his charge, is not to treat him as if he were guilty. To impute or count the sin of Adam to us. is to treat us as if we had committed it. To impute our sins to Christ, is to inflict upon Him the punishment due to them. To impute His righteousness to us, is to treat us as if we possessed it. God counted sin to Christ by making Him a sin-offering ; for the offering of the bullock for a sin-offering is said to be, the words being literally rendered, "making it sin." Numb. viii. 12. God counts righteousness to us, or the righteousness of Christ to us, by giving us pardon and eternal life, in consequence, or in reward of it. When it is said that faith is counted to the believer for righteousness, the meaning is not that God reckons his faith as if it were righteousness, or that it is reckoned unto his receiving righteousness, but simply, that he is treated as a righteous person ; and, consequently, the three forms of expression, to be justified by faith, to have Christ's righteousness imputed to us, and to have faith counted to us unto righteousness or justification, mean precisely the same thing, namely, to enjoy the blessings which God bestows upon men, in reward of that work of His Son, which He never contemplates but with ineffable delight ; and which constitutes "a moral basis for the extension of holy benevolence on a most widely extended scale, to such as in themselves were both wretched and worthless." [d]

Josiah gives the passover offerings

7—12. (7) **Josiah gave,** comp. conduct of Hez., ch. xxx. 24. (8) **Hilkiah,** ch. xxxiv. 9. **Zechariah,** the second

[a] 2 Chr. xxi. 2.

[b] "It is impossible to say whether it had been cast out by Amon, to make room for the idolatrous emblems with wh. he seems to have defiled the temple (2 Ki. xxiii. 4—6), or had only been temporarily removed by Josiah while he effected necessary repairs." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] *v.* 2. *Dr. T. Tattershall*, 1846.

[d] *R. Roberts.*

The reader is requested to refer also to chapter xii. 11. The leprosy of Miriam was the consequence of her sin and that of Aaron. The visitation upon her of this consequence of sin, was putting the sin upon her. And hence when Aaron implored of Moses that the leprosy might be removed, he uses the phraseology, "Lay not the sin upon us;" that is Let not the leprosy continue upon us.

[d] *Dr. Payne.*

priest, prob. **Jehiel**, poss. head of the line of Ithamar,[a] and chief of the Levites. (9) **passover offerings**, *i.e.* for thank-offerings. (10) **in their place**, to receive the sacrifices. (11) **flayed**,[b] removed the skins. (12) **removed**, better *separated* the portions intended for burnt-offerings.[c]

Preparation for religion.—Some persons, in thinking of religion, imagine that they should bring themselves into a certain condition of moral excellence before they seek religion; which is very much like a person sick, waiting until he is well before he send for the physician; or an invalid convalescent waiting until he fully recover before he seek a change of air and place; or a hungry man waiting until his appetite is satisfied before he sit down to eat; or a person shivering with cold waiting until he is warm, before he go to the fire. You go to the physician because you are sick; to the fresh air or place because you need it; to the food because you are hungry; to the fire because you are cold. In the same way you should seek religion and the Saviour, as you are, because you have need.[d]

13—19. (13) **roasted**, Ex. xii. 8, 9. **other holy offerings**, the peace-offerings. **sod they**, comp. 1 Sa. ii. 13—15. (14) **therefore**, *etc.*, bec. the priests were too much engaged to prepare food for themselves. (15) **place**, or station. **prepared for them**, that they might not be called away fr. their official duties. (16) **the same day**, getting both matters into the one day made all concerned so unusually busy. (17) **seven days**, comp. Hez.'s 14 days.[b] (18) **no passover like that**, 2 Chr. xxx. 26. "In its exact conformity to the requirements of the Mosaic law. (19) **eighteenth year**, 2 Ki. xxii. 3.

Influence of religion.—Just as the sun gleams over the palace, and into the cottage, flushing alike with its splendour the council chamber of the monarch and the kitchen of the peasant; as the all-pervasive light fills the vast dome of the sky, and the tiny cup of the flower; so religion illumines at once the heaven of our hopes, and the earth of our cares. Secularities become hallowed; toil brightens with the smile of God; business becomes crystalline; light from God comes through it to us; glances from us; goes through it to God.—*Bearing the sin of another.*—Not long since, at Brussels, a poor cripple girl committed some offence, for which she was sentenced to a week's imprisonment. Her sister slipped into her place, was carried to prison, and bore the week's punishment for her. At the end of the week it was discovered that the true offender had not been punished. The judge refused to consider the penalty paid, and even proceeded to sentence the sister to prison for attempting to shield the guilty, and would have carried it into effect had not the people of the city interposed.

20—24. (20) **after all this**, some 13 years after. **Necho**, son of *Psammeticus*. **came up**, "the maritime plain till he turned into the plain of Esdraelon, thence to penetrate into the passes of Lebanon."[a] **Carchemish**, a city on the Euphrates, commanding the passage of that river.[b] (21) **against the house**, or nation of Assyria. **God . . haste**, references to a single supreme God are found in the Egyp. inscriptions. (22) **disguised himself**, better *equipped himself*. **valley of Megiddo**, the exact spot was between Magdol and Hadadrimmon.

B.C. *cir.* 623.

a Wordsworth.

b A.S., *fleau*, to skin.

c Le. iii. 6—17. "Or the sense may be that fr. the lambs contributed by the king and by the priest, they separated the burnt-offering to be wholly consumed by fire, as the burnt-offering was, Le. i. 6—9."—*Wordsworth.*

d J. Bate.

celebration of the passover

a 2 Chr. xxx. 23.

The nearer we live to Jesus, and the closer our walk is with Him, the less inclination we have for pursuits and pleasures in which He is not the object.

"The essence of true holiness consists in conformity to the nature and will of God."—*Dr. Lucas.*

"Religion is the only metaphysic that the multitude can understand and adopt."—*Joubert.*

b S. Coley.

Josiah is killed at the battle of Megiddo

a Stanley.

b "It has generally been supposed identical with *Circesium*; but *Rawlinson*

B.C. *cir.* 623.

places it higher up the Euphrates, close to *Hierapolis* or Mabug."—*Ayre.*

(23) **archers,** "the light troops of the Egyptians were chiefly archers."[c] (24) **second chariot,** not a war-chariot, but one more comfortable for travelling.

War chariots and horses (*v.* 24).—As all captains have led-horses, that if one fails they may mount another, which Bochart shows was anciently the custom in war, so, when they fought in chariots, they had an empty one following them, into which they might go if the other proved unserviceable or inconvenient. At Cyprus, "we entered the courtyard of the governor's palace, and observed several beautiful horses, richly caparisoned, standing without any attendants, each fastened by a chain to its fore-leg and to a spike in the ground. This custom exists as a kind of parade in almost all the palace-yards of pachas, who are governors, and are called mussuleem." The Dutch ambassadors from the East India Company to China, in the middle of the seventeenth century, observed the same custom of exhibiting state horses in the court of the emperor's palace at Pekin.

25—27. (25) **Jeremiah,** prob. he composed a special dirge, wh. is lost to us. **in the lamentations,** not the Bk. called by this name in our Bible, but a national collection of dirges.[a] (26) **goodness,** religious faithfulness. (27) **book of the kings,** *see* 2 Ki. xxii., xxiii.

The standard of religion.—All religion must be Scripture religion, all worship Scripture worship, all zeal Scripture zeal; so that, let a man have never such sublime knowledge, and such burning zeal, yet, if it be not according to the law and the testimony, there is no light in them (Isa. viii. 20). It is but a vain worship of God, because God doth not require this, as our Saviour instructeth (Matt. xv. 9); so that the sum of all, and that into which all religion must be resolved into at last, is the Scriptures, the Word of God; for if you once lay this aside, why should not the Turkish devotion be as good as thine? Why should not the Mohammedan zeal be as acceptable as thine? but only this makes the difference; what may be proved by Scripture is approved of by God; so that all those arguments, "It's my conscience; I verily think I am bound to do thus; it's upon my spirit; I find much comfort and much sweetness in religion;" all this is nothing, for all false religions can and do say this: but hast thou the Word of God to warrant thee? doth that justify thee? all things else are but an empty shadow.[b]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

B.C. 610.

Jehoahaz

1—4. (1) **Jehoahaz,** also called *Shallum.*[a] (2) **three months,** only this short time bec. Necho took advantage of his victory at Megiddo. (3) **put him down,** removed him, bec. he had been popularly elected, *v.* 1. He wanted a creature of his own on the throne. **condemned,** *etc.*, they were to pay this heavy war indemnity. (4) **Eliakim,** the elder brother. **to Egypt,** where he died.[b]

Sin the same everywhere.—There is a plague, we will say, in London, which is cutting down a thousand in a day. Men think and speak of it as an awful scourge. But you are at Bath, or Carlisle, sick with the plague, alone, and you are ready to die. There is no difference between your plague and the plague in

c Spk. Com.

2 Ki. xxiii. 29,30.

v. 21. *J. Hyatt*, 320.

v. 24. *A Ser.* each by *J. Winter*, 1662; *Dr. W. Stainforth*, 1689; *T. Dawes*, 1695; *J. Powell*, 1695; *C. Bulkley*, 1761; and *J. Riddock*, ii. 29.

Jeremiah's lament for Josiah

a Comp. Zec. xii. 11.

vv. 24, 25. *J. Flavel*, vi. 120 *J. Boyse*, i. 318; *Bp. Fleetwood*, 560.

v. 25. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 214.

"Either take Christ in your lives, or cast Him out of your lips; either be that thou seemest, or else be what thou art."—*Dyer.*

b Anthony Burgess.

Jehoahaz

a Je. xxii. 10—12. 2 Ki. xxiii. 32—34.

b Je. xxiii. 10—12.

"As the dial is of no use in telling the observer the time of the day unless it be correctly set and the sun shine

London. All the symptoms which the thousand victims in London have, you exhibit; but you are not in a community where the disease is triumphant. But it is killing you; it does no more in London, only that it has gained the upper hand, and puts the inhabitants to flight. In like manner, sin, disobedience to God, and the dislike of Him from which it springs, is the same in substance everywhere. If we dislike God, His attributes, His requirements, His prohibitions, and if infinite mischief is not the consequence, it is because our influence is hemmed in and overruled; just as we might have a contagious disorder, and yet such preventives be employed as would keep it from doing much harm.[c]—*The power of sin felt in resistance.*—Peradventure some synner wyll saye, I perceyve nor feyl ony weyght in myself, do I never so many synnes. To whom we answere that yf a dogge hauynge a grete stone bounde aboute his necke be caste downe from an hygh toure, he felethe no weyght of that stone as longe as he is fallynge downe, but whan he is ones fallen to the grounde he is brasten all to peces by the reason of that weyght. Soo the synner goynge downe towarde the pyt of hell feleth not the grete burden of synne, but whan he shall come in to the depens of helle he shall fele more payne than he wolde. Also every creature which is aboute to put away the yoke of synne feleth the grete and grevous weyght of it.[d]

5—10. (5) **Jehoiakim,** the name given to Eliakim by Necho, *v.* 4. (6) **Nebuchadnezzar,**[a] this prob. was first expedition of *Nebuc.* during the lifetime of his father, *Nabopolassar.* (7) **vessels,** *etc.*, comp. Dan. i. 2, v. 2. (8) **abominations,** in restoring idolatry.[b] (9) **Jehoiachin,** or *Jeconiah;* comp. 2 Ki. xxiv. 8, 9. (10) **the year,** *etc.*, bringing the usual time for military expeditions. **goodly vessels,** *see v.* 7.[c]

Training of sin.—The evil spirit called sin may be trained up to politeness, and made to be genteel sin; it may be elegant, cultivated sin; it may be very exclusive and fashionable sin; it may be industrious, thrifty sin; it may be a political manager, a great commercial operator, a great inventor; it may be learned, scientific, eloquent, highly poetic sin; still it is sin, and, being that, has in fact the same radical or fundamental quality that, in its ranker and less restrained conditions, produces all the most hideous and revolting crimes of the world.[d]—*No peace to the sinner.* The soul can never be settled in a holy peace till it be turned from its sins. A wicked man's soul is in a mutiny; one affection wars against another, and all against the conscience, and the conscience against all. But where the heart is framed to the obedience of God's will, there is peace. Whilst we are in our sins, there is ever a fear of the war which is between God and us; and there is a war in ourselves, conscience disallowing our practices, and our practices disliking the conduct of conscience, so "there is no peace to the wicked." But when the Lord Jesus hath taken us in hand, and begun to cure us, and frame us aright, and show us His wonderful grace in turning us from our sin, here is matter provided for serenity and peace."[e]

11—16. (11) **Zedekiah,** a son of Josiah, whose proper name was *Mattaniah.*[a] (12) **before Jeremiah,** his prophecies delivered at this time are preserved to us. (13) **rebelled,** Eze. xvii. 13—18. (14) **polluted,** *etc.*, comp. Eze. viii. (15) **rising up**

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upon it; so the Christian conveys no Scriptural impressions of the Saviour's religion, unless his heart be made right by grace, and his life be shone upon by the light of the Sun of Righteousness." — *John Bate.*

c N. Adams.

d Fisher.

Jehoiakim

a "Nebuc. defeated the Egyp. at Carchemish, and drove them out of Asia, and reduced all the provinces west of the Euphrates to obedience, among the rest the kingdom of Jehoiakim, who became a vassal of the Assyrian empire."—*Jamieson.*

b Je. vii. 9, 30, 31, xix. 3—13, xxv. 8.

c Comp. 2 Ki. xxiv. 13.

d Dr. Bushnell. At the siege of a certain city the gates were forced open, but the besieged thrust them to again. At this point, one of the soldiers of the enemy thrust in the tip of his bayonet, just, and only just, preventing the bolt dropping into the sockets. They were then easily forced open again, and the city was lost.

e Dr. Manton.

Zedekiah

a 2 Ki. xxiv. 17, 18.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

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"Every man hath conversion, and the new birth; but it is not lawfully attained: they had never a sick night for sin: conversion came to them as a night-dream. In a word, hell will be empty at the day of judgment, and heaven crammed full. Alas! it is neither easy nor ordinary to believe and to be saved." —*Rutherford.*

"When the ungodly and the godly fall into the same sin, how can we distinguish between them? By a simple test, a test by which you may know a sheep from a swine when both have fallen into the same slough, and are in fact so bemired that you can hardly tell the one from the other, the unclean animal in circumstances agreeable to its nature wallows in the mire, but the sheep (type of the godly) fills the air with its bleatings, nor ceases to struggle to get out."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

The least sin, if unpardoned, may prove to you the unpardonable sin. You may be as good as others, and better than most, and miss heaven notwithstanding.

betimes, a figure for earnestness of effort. (16) **misused**, *etc.*, *see* Matt. xxiii. 37. **no remedy**, so judgment must fall.

Forbearance of God brought to a close.—From the words before us we are led to notice—I. God's patience exercised. 1. It was exercised to a most astonishing degree towards His people of old. 2. In like manner is it exercised in reference to us. In the sequel of our text we see—II. God's patience exhausted. 1. He was at last constrained to execute upon them His threatened vengeance. 2. Thus also will He do with respect to us.[b]

Unpardonable sin.—We would have you observe most carefully that it cannot be the greatness of the sin which strikes out its perpetrator from pardon. If you would not limit or deny the virtues of Christ's sacrifice, you must hold that the sin cannot be committed which in itself is too great to be pardoned. It were to shake the whole fabric of the atonement to suppose that a man's guilt may exceed the efficacy of the one great propitiation. Find me an offence too great to be pardoned, and you find me an argument with which to undermine the whole Christian system. And yet it is certain that Scripture speaks of an unpardonable sin, so that some kind or degree of offence excludes from forgiveness. Let us see how these statements may be reconciled. Christ Jesus, by His death, made all sin capable of forgiveness, provided the sinner put faith in His sacrifice. Hence there is no sin for which the Gospel does not proffer pardon, if he who have committed it repent and believe in Christ.—*Another on the same subject.*—If we may assert what will sound like contradiction, the very man who has committed the unpardonable sin may yet be pardoned. There is no impossibility against his pardon, for whilst he lives we have no right to pronounce it impossible that he should repent and acknowledge Christ; and if he repent and acknowledge Christ, the whole Bible is our warrant that he will be forgiven, that he will be saved. It is not that there is not virtue in the oblation of the Lamb of God to take away the guiltiness of infidelity, or, what is a vast deal more aggravated, the guiltiness of apostasy. It is only that infidelity and apostasy by their very nature place the deepest of all gulfs between the sinner and the Redeemer, so separating the two that, upon all human calculation, it seems impossible that they should come into union. We know that no man can turn unto Christ except through the influence of the Spirit of God. If, then, a man hath so withstood this Divine agent as to provoke the being left to himself; if he have blasphemed and vilified the Spirit so as to have quenched it, we may fairly declare of this man that he has committed the unpardonable sin; and yet not because his sin is too heinous for the provided expiation, but only because it consists in wearing out and alienating that Celestial Being who alone can enable us to appropriate the expiation. We do not pronounce it impossible that this man should be forgiven; not, at least, in one sense, if it be in another. He is still a living thing, a thing with a heart, a thing with a conscience; the sun yet rises upon him; the earth yet yields to him its fruits; the ministrations of the Gospel are yet going forward around him; and therefore we do not pronounce his pardon impossible. We know that a man's sentence is never indelibly written before his death. I must know that the last sun has risen upon an individual, or rather, that the

pulse is at its last beat; and yet that the heart retains all its obduracy and callousness, ere I can feel, in regard to this individual, that he has hopelessly departed, and that there is no possibility of bringing him within the border line of mercy.[c]

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c *H. Melvill.*

17—21. (17) **the Chaldees,** whose centre was Babylon. **slew,** *etc.*, Eze. ix. 6, 7; comp. La. ii. 7, 20. (18) **all the vessels,** 2 Ki. xxv. 14, 15. (19) **burnt,** *etc.*, this unusual severity was the consequence of the king's revolting. (20) **escaped,** in the great slaughter. **kingdom of Persia,** Da. v. 28, 31. (21) **to fulfil,** *etc.*, see Jc. xxv. 9, 12.[a] **sabbaths,**[b] or resting-time, not a fixed Sabbatic period; at least the precise periods cannot now be fixed.

the captivity of Judah

a Le. xxix. 10.

b Je. xxvi. 34, 35, 43.

vv. 20, 21. *F. Nolan, Warburton Lect.* 80.

Sin the greatest evil.—Saith the judgment of a Christian, "Sin is the greatest evil in all the world, 'tis the only thing that God abhors, and that brought Jesus Christ to the cross, that damns souls, that shuts heaven, and that has laid the foundation of hell. Or, it is the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the two-edged sword that hath wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul. Oh, it is that which hath hindered my prayers, and embittered my mercies, and put a sting into all my crosses, and, therefore, I can't but disapprove of it, and disallow of it, and condemn it to death; yea to hell, from whence it came."—"I thus preach, and thus think," saith Chrysostom, "that it is more bitter to sin against Christ, than to suffer the torments of hell."[c]—*The bondage of sin.*—Just so when the morning sun is bright, and the summer breezes gently blowing from the shore, the little river boat is enticed from the harbour to start on her trip of pleasure on the clear, calm sea. All nature seems to enlist in her service. The fair wind fills her sails, the favourable tide rolls onward in her course, the parted sea makes way for her to glide swiftly and merrily on her happy voyage. But, having thus been her servants and carried her whither she would, these soon become her masters and carry her whither she would not. The breeze that swelled her sails has become a storm, and rends them; the waves that quietly rippled for pleasure, now rise in fury, and dash over her for her destruction; and the vessel which rode in the morning as a queen upon the waters, sinks before night comes on, the slave of those very winds and waves which had beguiled her to use them as her servants.[d]

c *T. Brooks.*

There is no sin a man can be tempted to but he will find greater comfort in resisting than in indulging. Then a man shows himself to be a Christian when he chooses rather to suffer than sin. By suffering we avoid sinning; but by sinning we cannot avoid suffering. Get this principle into your hearts; there is nothing got by sin nor lost by holiness."—*Mason.*

"There is no harder work in the world than sin."—*South.*

d *Morse.*

22—23. (22) **Cyrus,** *see* Ezr. 1—3.[a] (23) **all the kingdoms,** the usual boastful language of the East, but nearly true. **Lord God of heaven,** through the witness of Daniel, etc., the Lord God was acknowledged in Persia.[b]

Cyrus liberates the captive

a Comp. Da. vi. 28, x. 1; Is. xlv. 1.

b Da. iii. 29, iv. 1, 34, 35, vi. 26, 27.

Use me, my God.—

Make use of me, my God!
Let me not be forgot;
A broken vessel cast aside,
One whom Thou needest not.

I am Thy creature, Lord,
And made by hands Divine;
And I am part, however mean,
Of this great world of Thine.

v. 22. *R. W. Evans, Script. Biog.* iii. 185.

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"We are too apt to misjudge the dispensations of Providence when we wish them with our own wishes."—*Skelton.*

"Divine Providence is remarkable in ordering that a fog and a tempest never did nor can meet together in nature. For as soon as a fog is fixed the tempest is allayed; and as soon as a tempest doth arise the fog is dispersed. This is a great mercy; for otherwise such small vessels as boats and barges, which want the conduct of the card and compass, would irrecoverably be lost." — *Thomas Fuller.*

†*Dr. H. Bonar.*

Thou usest all Thy works,
The meanest things that be,
Each has a service of its own,
For all things wait on Thee.

Thou usest the high stars,
The tiny drops of dew;
The giant peak and little hill,—
My God, O use me too!

Thou usest tree and flower,
The rivers, vast and small—
The eagle great, the little bird
That sings upon the wall.

Thou usest the wide sea,
The little hidden lake,
The pine upon the Alpine cliff,
The lily in the brake.

The huge rock in the vale,
The sand-grain by the sea,
The thunder of the rolling cloud,
The murmur of the bee.

All things do serve Thee here,
All creatures great and small;
Make use of me, of me, my God,
The meanest of them all.†

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